Chapter 2: Kingship in Crisis in Medieval Rajasthan

Introduction

This chapter examines the narratives of the Padmini legend known to have circulated in medieval Rajasthan. Several poems on the Padmini story were composed in the region from the late sixteenth century onwards. The first of these was Hemratan’s Gora Badal Padmini Caupai (c. 1589). (A translation of this poem is attached to the dissertation as an appendix.) This was followed by Jatmal Nahar’s Gora Badal ki Katha (1623?), Labdodhay’s Padmini Carit, also known as the Padmini Carit Caupai (c. 1645) and Bhagyavijay’s Gora Badal Caupai (1746).

From the seventeenth century onwards the Padmini story figures in poetic accounts eulogizing past and present rulers of Mevar. The legend is referred to in passing, in Man Kavi’s Raj Vilas (1677-1680). It is the subject of one canto each in Dayaldas’s Rana Rāsau (circa 1718), and Dalpati Vijay’s Khummān Raso (circa 1710-1734); and figures as one canto in the Sanskrit Amarakavyam (c. 1683-1693), of Ranchod Bhatt.

It is from the same period that the legend also begins to appear in chronicles and genealogies produced in the region. It occurs in the Sisod Vansāvali, dating to the early seventeenth century; and in Muhta Nainsi’s chronicle of the kingdoms of Rajasthan, Muhta Nainsi ri Khyāt (written around 1660 in Marwar). The story figures in great detail in the Chitor Udaipur Pāṭnāmā, a chronicle of the rulers of Mevar, composed and transmitted by the Barva Bhats, the hereditary genealogists of the Mevar Maharanas. Internal evidence in the Padmini narrative here would suggest that it was composed in the second half of the seventeenth century. (A translation of this account is attached to the dissertation as an appendix.)

Accounts of Padmini were also composed as vāṭ (bāṭ), prose narratives of varying length that were used extensively in the transmission of narratives about the past or other didactic material. Vāṭān have always been an oral form that were simultaneously preserved and transmitted in manuscript collections. The Padmini story appears in the eighteenth century Raval Ranaji ri Bāṭ, a compendium of vāṭān of varying lengths about the Ravals and Ranas of Mevar.

1 All dates are Christian era, except where stated otherwise
Lists of all known versions of the Padmini legend already exist in the literary histories assembled for various languages on the subcontinent. This dissertation is concerned with tracking major phases in the evolution of a legend, in their distinct literary and historical contexts. Hence this chapter will not analyze all the versions listed above in equal detail. However, the versions in medieval Rajasthan demonstrate broad similarities; and these traits must be understood as they were shaped by the politics, patriarchy and literary culture of the Rajput elites in the region, in the late medieval period. Further, the different social locations of these narratives bring about their own variations within this regional version of the legend.

Modern literary criticism in Hindi and Rajasthani has defined two main issues in reading the pre-modern literature of Rajasthan. One, since a substantial number of narratives deal with historical figures, modern scholars are concerned with the issue of historicity. This is understood as the degree of the narrative's fidelity to historical fact. Two, poetic compositions are tested on the aesthetic standards of a poetics originally formulated in Sanskrit, and later modified in various dialects of North India. Here, poems are comprehended and evaluated in terms of their rasa content. This reading is encouraged by the fact that so many of the poems invoke rasa aesthetics. These premises set off two kinds of readings. Since historicity is defined in terms of the degree of fidelity to history, clearly, poems can only be found to be more or less accurate. Secondly, most of these poems clearly state that their main aim is the celebration of one particular rasa, the vir rasa. Literary scholarship therefore confines itself to the appreciation of this rasa, and to the celebration of the real-life heroism that is assumed to precede this pervasive literary endeavour.

The issue can be posed differently. This chapter focuses on the code that these narratives articulate – of an ethics focused around gendered definitions of heroism, in various political situations that culminate in battle. Through the vehicle of such a dharma, a normative Rajput identity is defined at a particular historical moment. In other words, the Rajput values articulated by these narratives are located within the historical evolution of the political, patriarchal and literary practices of a regional Rajput elite. From this perspective the primacy of vir rasa is not construed in terms of the aesthetic preferences or sensitivities of individual poets and chroniclers. Instead, it must be comprehended in a context where this regional elite patronized the production
of certain kinds of literary narratives and chronicles. In turn, literary and historical narratives, and the normative interpretations encoded in their contexts of reception, were attuned to transitions in the political formation of the Rajputs. The Padmini narratives in medieval Rajasthan belong to this historical context.

This chapter begins by discussing the language of the Padmini narratives in medieval Rajasthan. The two dialects in which these occur, Dingal and Pingal, were the literary languages of the Rajput elite. The next section traces inherited continuities and evolving distinctions between literary and historical genres in the medieval period. Such shifts and overlaps in genre have a bearing on the transmission and reception of the Padmini narratives in Rajasthan. The third section provides the information available about the authors of these Padmini narratives. These authors can be located in two distinct social contexts, one Jain and the other from the 'bardic' castes. Equally, these two groups of authors belonged to two distinct contexts of patronage – Osval Jain and royal Rajput respectively. The fourth section on Caran traditions and their transmission examines the difficulties of ascribing precise authorship or date of original production to the royal genealogies (vantavali) and traditions (vāt) that were transmitted both orally and textually. The next section (Jains and Rajputs in medieval Rajasthan) demonstrates the prominence of Osval Jains in the Rajput kingdoms of medieval Rajasthan. The patrons of the Jain narratives of Padmini were powerful Osval clients in turn, of the Sisodia kings of Mevar. The section on Jain narrative traditions explores how medieval Jain authors modified inherited genres of exemplary narratives, to articulate this proximity to the Rajput ruling order.

In the second part of this chapter, the historical context of the Padmini narratives is explored. The structural features of Rajput polity in this period were competitive warfare between kingdoms, contested rights and obligations between kings and their chiefs, and elite polygamy that provided alternate resources to kings. The Rajput order was as deeply threatened by conflicts inherent in these defining features, as by imperial expansion.

The final part of this chapter discusses the Padmini narratives themselves. The two distinct contexts of patronage, Osval and royal Rajput, produced subtle variations in the accounts of the Chitor queen. Thus the two sets of narratives articulate their own perspectives on the role of
the king Ratansen, the chiefs Gora and Badal, the queen Padmini and the enemy Alauddin Khalji.

The chapter ends by examining how both these sets of texts were implicated in a Rajput ideology specific to Mevar. This is demonstrated by Jatmal Nahar’s account, produced in Lahore under Pathan patronage.

Language and literary traditions

Before considering questions of generic classification, it might be useful to consider the language of these narratives. In the past, poets have referred to the language spoken in the region now known as Rajasthan by the names of ‘Marubhūm bhasha,’ Maru Bhasha, Marudesiya Bhasha and Mārvāṃi. Modern scholars of Hindi and Rajasthani agree that there were two broad languages for ‘literary’ and historical writing in the medieval period. One, a form of Braj bhasha mixed with Rajasthani in varying proportions, shared its name with the science of prosody, and was known as Pingal within the region. In the larger hinterland of the Braj dialect, writings in Pingal may have been assimilated into a broader, evolving canon of Braj literature. The main basis of the second literary language, Dingal, widely adopted by Caran poets, is the Marwari dialect.

The Pingal and Dingal used in this literature is not entirely identical with either the Braj or Rajasthani dialects. Often words not used in everyday language, archaic words, or extinct words, are a feature of the two literary languages. Further, Dingal (the Marwari or western Rajasthani dialect of the late medieval period, fifteenth to eighteenth centuries), and what is understood by the term “Gujarati,” have a common

base in post-Apabhramsa, and were at one time the same language, termed by Tessitori Old
Western Rajasthani or Old Gujarati. Only in the fifteenth century did Dingal develop its own
characteristics, which mark it today as a regional dialect in its own right.  

An early poet like Padmanabh composed the Kānhadde Prabandh in Old Gujarati or Old Western
Rajasthani, in 1455.  

As Purshottam Menariya points out, Dingal spread through all the localities and
kingdoms of Rajasthan, later gaining the status of a “classical” (sastriya) literary language, with
its own conventions (1968: 19, 223-29). The language of early medieval texts in Rajasthan does
not obey the rules of Dingal grammar strictly; it is considered ‘impure’ by modern scholars,
perhaps because of the large number of loan-words from other dialects. It is the later medieval
texts (from about the late sixteenth century onwards), which use a ‘pure’ language and transgress
fewer rules of an evolving grammar. Many of the verse narratives, while locating themselves in a
strong (Sanskrit and/or Apabhramsa) linguistic and literary tradition, exhibit some degree of
linguistic fluidity. This perhaps is one explanation for the many controversies over naming the
language(s) of these compositions. The literary works themselves blend words from what may
have been merely adjacent dialects, or equally what may have been disparate languages, without
any sense of transgressing linguistic and poetic decorum. Later, Dingal poetics condemns this
phenomenon as a fault.  

Hemratan and Labdodhay composed their poems on Padmini in Dingal. This is also the
language of Nainsi and the Barva Bhatls, and of Dalpati Vijay’s Khummnān Raso. Man Kavi
composed his Raj Vilas in Pingal. Jatmal’s poem is in the same dialect.

There seem to be no obvious protocols for the choice of one literary language rather than
the other by a poet. Poets in eastern Rajasthan did not consistently prefer Pingal because of their
proximity to the Braj-speaking region. Similarly, Dingal is generally associated with the poetry

6 Norman P. Ziegler, “Marwari Historical Chronicles: Sources for the Social and Cultural History of
Rajasthan,” Indian Economic and Social History Review 13 (April-June 1976), 220.
7 Motilal Menariya, Dingal men Vir Ras (Prayag: Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, 1951) 21.
8 The use of words classified as belonging to different dialects, was eventually defined as a flaw, a dosha,
called chhaba kala. Motilal Menariya 1951, 29.
produced by the Caran poets, but Jain poets also used the dialect. And poets of the Caran caste took to composing equally in Pingal in later centuries. To further complicate the issue, performances of the ‘oral epics’ (pavāra) such as the Pabuji epic and the Bagaḍāvata Mahagatha, addressed to and patronized by pastoral and peasant castes, simply used the spoken form of the dialect prevalent in their region. Bhakti poets from the fifteenth century onwards did the same. Pingal and Dingal therefore do not constitute the comprehensive map of regional narratives. Together, they make up the literature that was produced, transmitted and canonized in the Rajput courts of the region.

The co-existence of these two ‘literary’ languages, Dingal and Pingal, bears upon the nature of the literary traditions of the Rajput courts. Dingal gradually evolved its own conventions in areas such as the tropes of poetic vocabulary or prosody, adapting from inherited and contiguous literary cultures. The poets forming this literary language drew upon inherited literary traditions in older languages – Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsa. Again, given the common root of Dingal and modern Gujarati in Old Western Rajasthani or Old Gujarati, these poetic traditions may have been common across areas that later grew into distinct political and linguistic regions. Thus modern Rajasthani and modern Gujarati both claim the fifteenth-century Kāṇhādāde Prabandh as a linguistic and literary ancestor.

Poets in the Rajput courts of Rajasthan who wrote in Pingal, shared and formed the literary conventions and traditions of the Braj dialect, in a region wider than Rajasthan. Thus, the rasos that are often perceived in modern times as the prime genre of Rajput heroic poetry, were composed not only within Rajasthan, but also throughout the Rajput hinterland in North India.9

These two cultural and linguistic phenomena – the separation of Dingal from Old Western Rajasthani and its evolution into a distinct literary language, and the evolution of Pingal in close proximity with Brajbhasha – coincided with a shift in the regional politics of late medieval Rajput kingdoms. Between the late thirteenth and the mid-sixteenth centuries, emerging Rajput kingdoms in the region were engaged in a four-way tussle for control of territory and resources, amongst

---

9 Most of these rasos were composed between the mid-sixteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. See Narottamadas Svami Bh.S. 1885, 3.
themselves and with three other major players, the Sultanates of Delhi, Malwa and Gujarat. From the second half of the sixteenth century onwards, both Malwa and Gujarat were absorbed into the emerging Mughal empire. The Rajput kingdoms of Rajasthan now defined themselves with reference to the Mughals. This shift in regional political dynamics was also articulated in terms of transitions in literary culture. From the late sixteenth century onwards, narratives in Dingal and Pingal, the literary languages of the Rajput elite, addressed themselves largely to the political and cultural issues generated in the Mughal heartland.

Problems of genre

This section discusses how accounts composed in literary and historical genres in the medieval period reveal as many shared tropes as distinguishing conventions. At the same time, the medieval reception of these genres cast Rajput traditions about the past as the authentic history of the region. The blurred boundaries between katha and khyat enable both genres to be deployed in narrating the Rajput past.

Systems of classification of writing in medieval Rajasthan operated on a number of levels simultaneously. Divisions of sastric disciplines that were ultimately inherited from Sanskrit continued to govern the production, reception and transmission of knowledge. Sitaram Lalas enumerates nine such disciplines—dharma śāstra, jyotiś śāstra, shakun śāstra, śālihotra, vṛīḍī vigyān, tatvā gjān, nītī śāstra, ayurveda śāstra and koka śār. As in older systems of classification in Sanskrit and Apabhramsa, narrative (katha, itihasa, prabandh, etc.) is distinguished from these 'sciences' (śāstra).

In the domain of narrative, two kinds of classification operate. The first is based on distinctions in narrative form. Forms such as raso, prakāś, vilās, rupak and vacanikā are distinguished from each other. All these forms focus around a central character (nayak), and could be seen as derived broadly from the older carit and prabandh forms of Apabhramsa poetry. A second order of classification is based on metrical differences, and on the use of music. Thus the
niśāni, jhulāṇā, jhamāl, guṭ, kundaliyā, kavitt, dūḥā and vel are distinguished from each other (Purshottam Menariya 1968, 229-31). These systems of character-centred and verse-centred classification are not mutually exclusive. For instance, a narrative about Padmini such as Labdodhay’s Padmini Carit Caupai could be described by both kinds of labels simultaneously – by its poet as well as in the course of its subsequent scribal transmission. Further, some character-centred forms follow inherited rules on the use of prose or specified verse forms. For instance, the vacanika intersperses prose with verse and also follows injunctions on rhyme between prose and verse sections.

From the above discussion, it will be clear that modern distinctions between literary and historical narratives did not exist in medieval Rajasthan. However, other distinctions existed. By the early fourteenth century, Jain prabandh narratives composed in neighbouring regions began defining themselves around historical characters:

Ancient stories (kathāḥ purāṇāḥ), because they have been so often heard,

Do not delight so much the minds of the wise,

Therefore I compose this Prabandhacintamani book

Out of the life-histories (vrtaistadāsannasatam) of men not far removed from my own time.¹²

Within these ‘life-histories’ of historical characters, however, miracles, encounters with supernatural beings or gods and other such elements (that from a modern perspective would be classified as un-historical) occurred frequently. This suggests that in the medieval period the terms “history” and “myth,” did not suggest “opposing cultural values” (as they do in the modern period), but rather a narrative continuum.¹³


¹³ The expression is Phillip B. Wagoner’s, from his suggestive discussion of similar issues in sixteenth century Telugu historiographic narratives. See Wagoner, Tidings of the King: A Translation and Ethnohistorical Analysis of the Rāyavādacakam (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993) 171, fn. 1 and 173, fn. 10.
Equally, the folk epics (described as katha, gatha) were seen as "really having happened," both by the communities that possessed them and by the writers of more formal dynastic histories. Nainsi includes a long account of Pabuji, the deified hero of a folk epic and devotional cult, in his Khyat (composed in the seventeenth century).

Other narratives about the past, whether fictive or historical, were also described as katha. Hemratan described his narrative about Padmini as sachi katha (true tale), a formulation that is not at all self-contradictory in medieval Rajasthani. It is clear from these instances that there was a degree of interplay between 'folk,' and more formal 'literary' and 'historical' genres, in terms of both shared characters and shared tropes of narrative such as miracles and curses.

And yet, by the seventeenth century, the form of the khyat emerges as a distinct mode of narrating the historical past (Ziegler 1976, 233). Some distinctions between the literary and historiographical domains do suggest themselves in this context. Mughal emphasis on historical writing and record keeping stimulated the rise of the khyat and vigat literature. As Ziegler points out, "illustrious ancestry was an important and necessary tool used to gain favour and position at the Mughal court, given Mughal, and especially Akbar’s, emphasis on ancestry" (Ziegler 1976, 234). The concern to record chronology and succession in vāñśāvāli and pīḍhīvāli is manifested in a spate of such narratives from this period. These genres are overtly concerned not only with asserting ancestry, but also with recording data about holdings and rights in land (in order to assert legitimacy).

The relationship between these emerging regional genres of historiography and Mughal histories was not restricted to Mughal influence alone. Mughal historians applied their own criteria of historical plausibility to the Sanskrit as well as regional-language narratives they engaged with. Thus, while the Mahabharata was regarded as describing the great antiquity of the

---

15 Wagoner sees a similar interplay between the oral genre of local epic (katha) and dynastic histories, in sixteenth century Telugu country. Wagoner 1993, 171, fn. 1.
16 Sitaram Lalas, "Rajasthani Gadya Sahitya," in Rajasthani Sabd Kos (Jodhpur: Rajasthani Shodh Sansthan, 1988), 1:194. Lalas also points out that it is from this period that many Arabic and Persian words enter the Rajasthani language.
world and its inhabitants, it was seen nevertheless as “out-stepping the bounds of the possibilities of physical existence.” The epic was regarded as more akin to the stories of Amir Hamza, as it contained “numerous extravagant tales and fictions based on imagination.” Badauni similarly regarded the “events” narrated in the Ramayana as “not true at all and nothing but tales of pure fiction and imagination like the *Shahnama* and the stories of Amir Hamza.”

On the other hand, Mughal historians based their accounts of the Rajput past on the latter’s traditions of heroic poetry. Thus the *Prithviraj Raso* is Abu’l Fazl’s source for the triumphs and defeats of Prithviraj Cauhan, in the *A’in-i Akbari’s* account of Delhi’s history (Jarrett 1996, 2:305-07). Further, the Padmini story figures in his account of the history of Mevar (Jarrett 1996, 2:274-75). Similarly, the compilers of the *Tarikh-i Alfi* were concerned “to compile an authentic history based on reliable sources,” so that “interested and perverse parties” would not be able to “make interpolations among the facts of history.” In this definitive ‘history’ of one thousand years of Islam, they relied upon Rajput traditions and recounted the Padmini story, even though they would have found no corroborative evidence in the Persian histories of the Sultanate period.

On the one hand, therefore, the writing of history in Rajasthan was adopting new norms of historical plausibility in an uneven manner, and evolving new genres. On the other hand, its continued resort to mythic narratives, particularly in recounting the early history of the region, was appropriated by the formal histories of the Mughals in Persian. Through this route the inherited and recast narratives of the past in Rajasthan were reinforced as the ‘authentic’ history of the region. The latter trend is best exemplified in the continued production and transmission of *raso* narratives. These constructed a heroic past for the Rajputs, and provided the context of a

---

heroic tradition in which to comprehend their contemporary battles. The rasos are a striking instance of how ‘literature’ and ‘history’ could operate as a continuum of forms, particularly with reference to narratives of the past.

It is also obvious that the poems of Hemratan and Labdodhay were located in the domain of katha, and followed different conventions. The tale could still broadly be described as a truthful narration. However, it was recognized as following a different set of protocols that licensed the use of ‘adornments.’ This did not imply that the katha was seen as autonomous of its social, even political context. Again, Hemratan’s invocation reveals his awareness that such sachi katha served the same “broad political ends of the Rajput, in his defence of rank and rights to land and in his claims of legitimacy to positions of authority” (Ziegler 1976, 237).

In the light of this discussion, this chapter does not distinguish between ‘literary’ and ‘historical’ kinds of narrative among the medieval Rajasthani accounts of Padmini. Divergences do exist between Hemratan’s poem and its successors on the one hand, and the royally sponsored chronicle tradition on the other. However, these divergences are generated by the distinct contexts of patronage that the two kinds of narrative emerge from. They do not rest in any clear differentiation of narrative form. Further, Ranchod Bhatt’s Amarakavyam illustrates how a work describing itself as kavya could be deployed in an official, royal chronicle.

The authors

Hemratan’s Gora Badal Caritra is the first known poetic rendering of the Padmini story in Rajasthan. The poem circulated widely in Gujarat and Malwa as well. Hemratan was a Jain monk belonging to the monastic lineage of the Khartar gaccha. He composed the Gora Badal Caritra in 1589 AD in Sadri (an important town on the border between southwestern Mevar and Marwar) at the request of Tarachand, an important local official. Tarachand was also the younger brother of Bhamashah, the trusted Jain minister of Rana Pratap. The brothers belonged to the Kavadiya

---

22 John Cort points out that the English terms ‘monk’ and ‘nun’ are inappropriate to refer to Jain sadhus and saddhvis, calling up as they do associations of Christian monasticism. I retain these translations for lack of a better alternative. See Cort, “The Svetambar Murtipujak Jain Mendicant,” Man, N.S. 26 (1991) 667, fn. 1.
gotra (exogamous clan unit) of the Osval jati (caste), which was associated closely with the Sisodia Rajput rulers of Mevar.

Hemratan was one of the more prominent contemporary members of the Khartar gaccha, the Jain monastic lineage from which the spiritual mentors of Bhamashah and his clan were drawn. An accomplished poet, he rendered several Jain exemplary narratives into the local Rajasthani dialect, for use by Jain teachers in their discourses. Among his other compositions are the Abhavakumar Caupai, Mahipal Caupai, Shilavati Katha, Lilavati Katha, Ram Ras and Sita Carit (Jina Vijay Muni 1990, 7). The number of these works indicates that he was an established kathakar.24

Labdodhay, another Jain monk belonging to the Khartar gaccha, composed the Padmini Caritra Caupai in 1650 at Udaipur, at the request of his patron Bhagchand. The latter was the younger brother of Hansraj, chief minister of Rani Jambuvati, Rana Jagatsingh’s mother (Jina Vijay Muni 1990, 9). Their father Kesari Katariya had earlier been the same queen’s minister.25 Bhagchand himself led a military expedition against Banswara and the Bhils and forced them to accept the suzerainty of Jagatsingh.26 The family belonged to the Katariya gotra of the Osval jati.

Among Labdodhay’s other compositions are the Ratnacuda-Manicuda Caupai and the Malayasundari Caupai. The first narrative retells in the local dialect an old Jain tale exemplifying the virtues of dana dharma. The second again retells an old Jain tale exemplifying a woman’s virtue and duty, her shila dharma (Nahta 1961, 32-3).

Jatmal Nahar composed the Gora Badal Katha or Gora Badal ri Bat at Simbala village near Lahore in 1628 AD.27 There is some uncertainty over his identity, but most scholars are agreed that Jatmal the son of Dharamsi, was a śravak (layman) belonging to the Nahar gotra of

24 Jina Vijay Muni’s description is difficult to translate. Literally a story-teller, the term refers to a composer of narratives, generally exemplary, from epic, Puranic and folk sources.
27 Purshottam Lal Menariya dates Jatmal’s poem to 1771, but the scholarly consensus favours the earlier date.
Osval Jains. The poem was composed under the patronage of the local Pathan ruler Ali Khan Niazi Khan, in the reign of Jahangir. That this poem was composed outside Mevar, and under Pathan patronage, is noteworthy. But the probable Osval identity of the poet points to the transmission of literary narratives amongst a Jain community dispersed over a wider region than Rajasthan.

Dalpativijay was a Jain monk of the rank of yati belonging to the monastic lineage of the Tapagaccha. He was probably initiated after 1699. Stray statements in the Khummañ Raso suggest that he may have been in some financial difficulties, but did not wish to actively seek assistance from anybody. He is not known to have composed any other work. No other evidence is available about him or about the lay elite he may have been associated with.

Even less is known about Dayaldas, the author of the Rana Rasau. He was a Rav, that is, a member of one of the regional bard-castes. The Ravs produced genealogies and chronicles like the Bhats, and heroic poetry like the Cārans. They also entered into similar client-patron relations with the Rajput elite. (Chand Bardai is the best-known Rav poet.) No other narratives are attributed to Dayaldas, and nothing is known of his patron. Therefore the Rana Rasau can be located only within a broad context of courtly, possibly royal patronage, like many other Caran and Bhat narratives.

Rancho Bhatt, author of the Sanskrit Amarakavyam (c. 1683-93), was a Telang Brahman. His ancestors had migrated to Mevar and settled there. He provides information about himself and his family in his Rajaprashasti Mahakavyam, the most significant royal inscription composed in late medieval Mevar. Many members of this lineage of scholars were closely associated with the Sisodias. They were commissioned to compose inscriptions in Sanskrit for various public occasions. They received grants of several villages in connection with their ritual

---

28 For a different opinion, see Tikam Singh Tomar, Hindi Vir Kavya 1600-1800 (Allahabad: Hindustani Akademi, 1954) 22-23. Tomar argues that Jatmal may have been a Jat rather than a Jain. However, scholarly consensus favours the Osval hypothesis.
and scribal roles, and by virtue of their status as Brahman scholars. Thus, villages were granted to them on occasions such as the return of the queen Jambuvati from a major pilgrimage, the consecration of the idol in the Jagannathrai temple at Udaipur, and the construction of the Udaisagar lake.31

Nothing is known about the individual author of the eighteenth-century Raval Ranaji ri Vat. The recitation and compilation of such vātān (bātān) was “traditionally the domain of learned specialists of the caste of Maru Carans, who maintained hereditary attachments to particular Rajput families . . . whose histories and traditions they were responsible for preserving” (Ziegler 1976, 220, 223). Textual evidence (discussed below) would suggest direct royal patronage for the compiler of this work. The Chitor-Udaipur Pāṁāmā was compiled and transmitted by Barva Bhats, hereditary genealogists and chroniclers of the Sisodia ruling lineage. Again, the authors of the Pāṁāmā enjoyed royal patronage directly.

The Padmini narratives thus seem to have emerged from two contexts, one broadly identifiable as Osval Jain, and the other as ‘Cāraṇ’32 under direct royal patronage. The following sections examine the distinct social contexts of these two traditions of narratives.

‘Caran’ traditions and their transmission

This section summarizes Ziegler’s discussion of the “historical chronicles” produced by Carans and Bhats (Ziegler 1976). As he points out, the bāt (vāt) was an “inspirational biographical narrative” that dealt with “the life history of an important individual . . . or with particular episodes in his life, which are seen to be significant.” Bātān also narrated important events “such as a battle, the settlement of hostilities (vair) between two different Rajput groups, the conquest of land, or with a marriage and relationships within a family.” The recitation of bātān often took place “at the homes of Rajputs before their families. At such times, Cāraṇs

32 In modern literary histories of Rajasthan, the term ‘Cāraṇ’ is used as a broad rubric for the narratives produced by Carans, Bhats, Ravs, and even Brahmans, that celebrated Rajput heroic traditions. See Sitaram Lalas 1988, for one notable example of this trend.
would be summoned specially for the purpose of relating family traditions. In addition, bātañ would be recited on religious holidays and at festivals.

For most Carans, "the art of recitation and poetic composition was only a hereditary pastime, subordinate to primary occupations such as horse and cattle trading, military service or agriculture." Only a small number practiced the art as their profession. These Carans maintained hereditary associations with particular families (whose histories and traditions they were responsible for preserving). Hereditary rights to customary gifts like neg (demanded by a Caran at the gate during a Rajput wedding) were also established between the Rajput lineage of patrons and their corresponding lineages of Caran clients.33 Such gifts often took the form of grants of sasan land, exempted from paying revenue to the state. In Rajasthan and Gujarat-Saurashtra, by the late medieval period Carans had acquired hereditary rights to such lands. However, Caran poets affiliated formally or informally with one ruling lineage, could reside in the kingdom of a rival lineage as well. For example, Caran Karanidan, who produced the monumental Suraj Prakas about the history and glory of the Marwar Rathors, lived in Shulvala village in Mevar (Motilal Menariya 1951, 41). Further, distinguished bards and poets also could and did compete for the favour of kings and prominent chiefs.

Bātañ were transmitted both orally and as manuscript collections. The emphasis was on transmitting the kernel of a narrative (embellished in recitation), rather than an accurately copied text. This character of the bātañ meant that they were prone to what Ziegler describes as "a process of acculturation to which they are subject over time." Therefore bātañ are virtually impossible to date with any degree of accuracy. At best they can be dated roughly to a given century, on the basis of the terminology that they employ. It is also apparent that bātañ gain several layers of historical understanding in this process of acculturation through their performance and transmission. Thus the historical understanding of successive later periods is superimposed invisibly, upon narratives of events from an earlier period. Even those bātañ

33 The Sodas established such relations with the Sisodias, the Rohads with the Rathods, and the Dursavats with the Devras. See Hiralal Maheshwari, Bharatīya Sahitya ke Ninnata ser. (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1985) 12.

111
narratives which present themselves as contemporary with the events they describe, are invariably subjected to this kind of retrospective re-construction.

Genealogies called vanśāvali, were maintained by members of the Bhat caste for particular Rajput families, with whom they had “hereditary relationships of service.” Vanśāvali were generally kept by and were the property of the families themselves, and the genealogists came to the family home to make new entries. The vanśāvali recorded “the names of ancestors reaching back to clan founders or to the immediate founders of a particular line.” They also narrated important events involving members of the family. Such descriptions took “the form of recorded oral traditions in prose and poetry about the exploits of more distant ancestors, and short biographical sketches with information on grants of land, battles, or service for a local ruler for members of the more recent past, often with dates supplied.”

It was the responsibility of the particular Bhat families to preserve the genealogical bahi (registers) by bequeathing them to their sons. Often, such vanśavali would be bequeathed to more than one son of the Bhat. In such cases, different segments of the Bhat lineage would inherit the right to maintain genealogies for particular segments of the Rajput lineage in question. Where this happened, distortions could often creep in, into the recording of descent and traditions about other segments of the extended lineage. Genealogies were also commonly subject to “deliberate manipulation” as they addressed themselves overtly to the political interests of the evolving Rajput elite in later periods. And just like the būtān, the vanśāvali were “subject to alteration over time in response to changing cultural values, such as for example, the emphasis on primogeniture over collateral succession.”

The Chitor Udaipur Pāṭnāmā is a genealogical account of this kind. It is therefore impossible to ascertain its date of origin. However, internal textual evidence would point to a provenance not earlier than the Mughal period. The emperor’s palace in Delhi is described as the Red Palace, with public and private audience halls, pointing to the Red Fort built by Shahjahan.

---

34 Many caste groups all over the northern part of the subcontinent have been concerned with maintaining genealogies of their families, clans and castes. The specialists involved have often called themselves ‘Bhats’ of one kind or another. This chapter is concerned exclusively with the Rajputs and their Bhat genealogists.
One of Alauddin's advisers is the Nawab of Hyderabad, again a personage belonging to the later Mughal period. And two of Padmini’s defenders, Fatiya and Jetmal, are stated to be Baghela Rajputs. This was a Rajputizing group from Hindustan that rose to prominence under the Mughals. Such evidence suggests that a major part of the Padmini episode in the Patnama was composed in the same period as the other texts discussed in this chapter – not earlier than the seventeenth century.

**Jains and Rajputs in late medieval Rajasthan**

This section explores how the Jain authors of the Padmini narratives in medieval Rajasthan belonged largely to a monastic lineage. These monks were closely associated with powerful Osval clients of the ruling Sisodia lineage in Mevar. The Osval patrons aligned their fortunes closely with those of the Sisodia state, serving as ministers, financing its military expeditions and even leading them.

Hemratan and Labdodhay belonged to the Khartar gaccha, a Svetambar monastic lineage closely associated with the Osval jati of Jains. The monastic community of the murtipujaks (one of three sects among the Jains) is organized into distinct groups called gaccha. As Phyllis Granoff has shown, “many of the gacchas came into existence as late as the sixteenth century, and few can be attested before the eleventh century.” Further, “the fully developed gaccha system seems to have involved a . . . split in the larger Svetambar order into many rigidly exclusive, competing and usually mutually hostile groups.” Areas of conflict between monks of competing gacchas were articulated around points of doctrine as well as ritual practice. Such conflicts were

---

35 The Svetambar Jains, whose sadhus dress in white, are divided into murtipujaks, sthānakvāsis and terūpanthis. The first group worship images in temples, the latter two do not. The latter two sects came into existence in the eighteenth century, although the reform movement that ultimately gave rise to the sthanakvasis in the early eighteenth century had begun three centuries earlier, in the mid-fifteenth century. See Cort 1991, 652.


37 The Ancal gaccha was established in 1113 AD, the Khartar gaccha in Anhilvada Patan, the capital of medieval Gujarat in 1124, the Tapa gaccha in Chitor in 1229 and the ParsvaChandra gaccha in Nagpur in 1516. Each of these came into being as a reaction against some established order of Jain ascetic conduct, first against the practice of mendicants dwelling in temples (caityavasins), then against lax discipline amongst the ascetic orders, or against doctrinal precept. See Cort 1991, 655.

38 Phyllis Granoff, "Religious Biography and Clan History among the Svetambara Jains in North India," *East and West* 39 (December 1989) 195.
often played out in philosophical debates, competitive displays of magical powers, and poetry
competitions (held to establish the superiority of one or the other gaccha) (Granoff 1989, 197).

The division of monks into gacchas was “closely paralleled by a division of the lay
community into ... gotras, as well as castes.” Granoff argues that the Jain gotra system
is intimately tied in with the gaccha system of organization among the monks, who took it
upon themselves to record the histories of the lay clans and castes and who fostered a special
relationship between particular clans and particular gacchas of monks.

Thus the monks in such lineages functioned as the Jain equivalents of the caste bards and
genealogists of the Rajputs. They even usurped the function of the traditional Rajput genealogists
in some cases (Granoff 1989, 198). The composers’ purpose was to cement ties between their
own gacchas and particular gotras. The gaccha of the monk responsible for a clan’s original entry
into the Jain fold would have a perpetual right to serve the ritual, spiritual, and record-keeping
needs of that clan (Granoff 1989, 197).

Both Hemratan and Labdodhay were monks of the rank of yati, who had taken lesser
vows as opposed to samvegis (liberation seekers). Yatis could be worldly (sansāri), i.e. married,
or renunciant (tyāgi) i.e. celibate. Only celibate mendicants could rise to become the leaders of a
lineage of yatis. Such leaders in medieval Rajasthan and Gujarat are known to have lived in great
splendour. They exercised great influence as wizards and royal preceptors, legitimating and even
helping to establish royal dynasties (Cort 1991, 657-58). The Khartar gaccha yatis are known to
have controlled great wealth at centers (gādīs) like Udaipur, Bikaner and Jaipur. This particular
gaccha is also known to have produced a long line of yatis who devoted themselves to scholarship
(Cort 1991, 659). The proximity between the monks of the Khartar gaccha and the Osval Jain
laity, in turn closely affiliated with the Sisodia rulers of Mevar, is a significant factor shaping the
exemplary narratives of Padmini produced by Hemratan and Labdodhay.

Bhama Shah and Tarachand were the sons of Bharmal Kavadiya of Alwar. Bharmal was a
kilādār (military commander) at Ranthambhor during the time of Rana Sanga, who moved to
Chitor when Sher Shah conquered the former fortress. His two sons rose to political eminence
under Rana Pratap. Bhama Shah became the pradhan (chief minister), and Tarachand was given
charge of the strategically important Godwar region (bordering Marwar). Both brothers are known to have commanded troops at the battle of Haldighati. When Pratap was compelled to retreat into the hills by the advancing Mughal forces, Bhama Shah is said to have made available to the king his entire personal fortune, sufficient to maintain five thousand men for twelve years.

This indicates the proximity between prominent Osval Jain families and ruling Rajput elites in late medieval Rajasthan. Naroji Bhandari, a Chauhan Rajput who converted to Jainism under the influence of a Jain acharya, provided vital help to Rao Jodha, the founder of the kingdom of Jodhpur. He became the latter’s prime minister. From the late fifteenth century, the clan began to be known as Osvals, when they entered into marriage relations with another Osval clan, the Mulpots. Karamchand of the Bachavat Osval clan became the prime minister of Raja Raisingh at Bikaner in the late sixteenth century. His family had played a key role in the establishment of the kingdom of Bikaner, providing its founder Rao Bika with the requisite financial resources. Bachavat Osvals continued as prime ministers at Bikaner between the late sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Similarly, Naroji Bhandari’s descendants occupied the offices of pradhan and divan in Jodhpur for several generations. In Mevar, Bhama Shah’s son succeeded his father as pradhan. The likelihood that such political office could be inherited added to the status of the Jain clan in question.

The substantial financial resources that the Jains controlled were available not only to the Rajput kings, they were offered to other rulers as well. The brothers Dharana Shah and Ratna Shah, whose family had originally been based in Sirohi, advanced a loan to the son of Sultan Hoshang Shah of Malwa. When this prince became the Sultan Muhammad Shah Ghori, he repaid the entire sum with interest. Subsequently, the family of Ratna Shah settled in Malwa. The other brother Dharana Shah settled in Mevar in the reign of Rana Kumbha (mid-fifteenth century). He

---

39 Jaimal and Ratan Chand, belonging to another Osval clan of the Mehtas, were also among the eminent followers of Pratap who were killed at Haldighati. See Hukam Singh Bhati, Maharana Pratap ka Parivar aur Samantgan (Udaipur: Pratap Shodh Pratishthan, 1991) 30.
40 Ram Vallabh Somani, Jain Inscriptions of Rajasthan (Jaipur: Rajasthan Prakrit Bharati Sansthan, 1982) 233-34.
42 For the career of Karamchand Bachavat, see Bhutoriya 1995, 1:332-34
eventually financed the construction of the major Jain temple at Ranakpur, having obtained a land
grant from the king for this purpose (Somani 1982, 232-33). Similarly, in the early sixteenth
century Karma Shah advanced a sum of rupees one lakh to Bahadur Shah when the latter was at
Chitor, on condition that when he became the Sultan of Gujarat, he would permit the renovation
of an important Jain temple. These were terms that the prince abided by. Karma Shah thus gained
political leverage with the future Sultan of Gujarat.

Equally, he asserted his pre-eminent status
within the Jain community (following the long-established precedent for ruling elites on the
subcontinent), by undertaking the renovation of a religious shrine. Karma Shah’s importance in
the court of Rana Ratansingh of Mevar can be gauged from his designation as Rājya-Vyāpār-
Bhār-Dhorāya (he who carries the burden of the kingdom’s trade) (Somani 1982, 232-33).

Wealthy Jain merchants had also held important positions under the Khalji and Tughlaq Sultans in
Delhi in the fourteenth century.

Such evidence indicates that this Jain elite consolidated the control it had already
established over trade in certain regions, by advancing loans to rulers and potential rulers.

However, Bhama Shah’s and Tarachand’s financial support for the Mevar state, or Karamchand
Bachavat’s role in Bikaner under Raja Raisingh, point to a somewhat more sustained political
investment in the Rajput states. This is borne out by their participation in the military campaigns
of Mevar and Bikaner, respectively. Bhama Shah and Tarachand’s actions are read customarily
as proof of their loyalty to their ruler and their land. Such an interpretation is based on the fact
that they were involved in a defensive campaign at Haldighati. However, Bhama Shah also led a
successful raiding expedition into the Mughal subah of Malwa, from which he brought back

43 B.D. Chattopadhyaya notes a similar phenomenon for the early medieval period; when, in the context of
"the endemic wars . . . of the ruling elites," "the support expected by the royalty from the merchants in this
regard is a common feature of royalty – big merchant collaboration." See "Markets and Merchants in Early
Medieval Rajasthan," in The Making of Early Medieval India, 1994 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press,

44 For example, Shah Thakkar Pheru was the chief official in charge of precious stones in the royal treasuries
of Alauddin Khalji; he was given charge of the royal mint in the reign of Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah, and
continued in this post in the reign of Ghayasuddin Tughlaq. See Bhutoriya 1995, 1:328-29.

45 Karamchand Bachavat led the Bikaner forces as they defended their kingdom from an attack by Mirza
Ibrahim of Nagpur. He also led military campaigns which brought Sojat and Jalor under the control of
Bikaner. See Bhutoriya 1995, 1:333.
booty of twenty lakhs of rupees and twenty thousand *ashrafis*. Similarly, Labdodhay’s patron Bhagchand led a military expedition against the Rajput chief of Banswara and forced him to accept the suzerainty of Rana Jagatsingh. Bhagchand’s career demonstrates the continued involvement of this particular Jain elite in the political fortunes of the Mevar state, whether in defence against an external threat, or in its internal military consolidation.

Bhama Shah and his brother, Jaimal and Ratanchand Mehta, and Bhagchand, all belonged to various *gotras* of the Osval *jati* of Jains. So did Singhvi Dayal Shah during the reign of Rana Rajsingh. Dayal Shah rose to royal favour by unmasking the role of one of Rajsingh’s queens in the murder of the heir to the throne; the Rana ordered the queen’s death. Dayal Shah later displayed conspicuous valour in the battles between the Mevar rulers and Aurangzeb. However he could not consolidate these gains for his family. His son did not inherit his office or his influence. From these instances, it is clear that the Osval *jati* of Jains increased its status and prestige in the various Rajput kingdoms of late medieval Rajasthan. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mevar, a number of Osval *gotras* were closely involved with the political fortunes of the ruling Sisodia lineage.

As noted above, particular *jatts* and *gotras* within the Jain community evolved at different historical moments. Such groups often resided and traded in different regional centers, thus not competing directly with each other. But in Gujarat and Rajasthan, Jain religious orders and social groups had been very active. In this region there seems to have been the distinct possibility that more than one *jati* or *gotra*, together with its associated monastic *gaccha*, was present in the same local region or urban center. Chitor is known to have been an important Digambar Jain religious and scholastic center from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. Svetambar monastic orders were active here in the same period (Somani 1982, 120-22).

---

47 Somani 1982, 239. The involvement in political intrigues that was an index of the influence Jains could wield in these late medieval Rajput kingdoms, did not always prove so beneficial to them. The entire Bachavat family were put to death in Bikaner in the early seventeenth century, for the suspected involvement of one member in a failed plot against the ruler. Only one member, who happened to be in Mevar then, survived. Somani 1982, 234-35.
More thorough exploration of the relations between these competing Jain sects in the Rajput kingdoms of late medieval Rajasthan is beyond the scope of this dissertation. There are indications though, that such relations may have been competitive. Granoff points out how the religious biographies and pattavalis (monastic genealogies) of various medieval gacchas “openly belittle[d] the claims of rival groups,” by “depicting their own monks engaged in philosophical debate with members of rival groups and always emerging victorious from these encounters” (Granoff 1989, 196-97). Monks often composed such sectarian biographies at the behest of lay patrons. This suggests that the competitive relations between various monastic gacchas may have been resonant of rivalries between the various lay jatis and gotras among Jains. Patronage of religious shrines was construed as one arena for competition and even hostility amongst various lay groups. The Tapāgaccha Paṭṭāvali claims, along with Khartar gaccha biographies, that “Samudra Suri had freed the Nagda temple [of Parsvanath] from Digambar Jains.”

Such sectarian activity was often seen as an arena for contests over prestige and political influence between various Jain lay groups. Other avenues for establishing pre-eminence also evolved. It is in this context that the Osval Jains’ additional claims about proximity to the ruling Rajput elite must be understood. The Osval social order affiliated itself with, even modeled itself on, the practices of the Rajput ruling elite. A striking instance is provided by Tarachand, who is said to have had four wives, and at least one concubine (khawār) (Qanungo 1969, 50). On his death, these women committed sati, in the manner of elite Rajput women (Somani 1982, 78). Even more strikingly, the women of Karamchand Bachavat’s family committed jauhar (in the early seventeenth century), when Raja Sursingh of Bikaner attacked and put Karamchand’s sons to death, for their suspected involvement in a plot against his father (Bhutoriya 1995, 1:334). Osvals were not the only Jain group making such claims of proximity to Rajput ruling lineages in the period. Members of other Jain castes laid claim equally to Rajput origins. In the seventeenth century, Jains of diverse sectarian affiliations built memorial stones (jījhār, “warrior”) for those

---

48 Somani 1982, 127. Somani cites other instances of contests over religious patronage.
killed in battle. Exemplars of military prowess were commemorated in this fashion (Somani 1982, 80).

For the purposes of this chapter, I have demonstrated that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, elite Osval lineages increased their political status with the Sisodia rulers of Mevar. During this period, they identified themselves closely with the ruling Rajputs. They evolved codes and practices modeled on those of the Rajputs, including narratives of common origin. These facts are important in understanding the sustained role of the Osvals and their chroniclers, genealogists and spiritual mentors in the Khartar gaccha, in propagating the Padmini story in late medieval Rajasthan.

‘Jain’ narrative traditions

Over the centuries, much Jain literary production has been directed towards propagating Jain religio-ethical values. This was achieved in a number of ways. Heroes specific to the Jain religion were celebrated, as in tales about Tirthankars. Further, Puranic material was adapted to a Jain formula in which typically the protagonist converts to Jainism at the end of the narrative. Alternatively, Jain authors created narrative material for Jain causes by reworking already popular genres. Thus, a romance narrative of a king’s love, the obstacles to it, and its successful culmination, was recast as a story involving a sresthi instead—the latter having been the most significant patrons of Jainism. The protagonist of such a romance narrative was invariably converted into a Jain monk at the successful resolution of his love and life. Such narratives demonstrate the restructuring of available generic formulae into a Jain teleology.

Contemporary heroes were also incorporated into the Jain fold. Merutunga’s fourteenth-century Prabandhacintāmani appropriates legendary heroes like the kings Vikram and Bhoja into a history of the kings of Gujarat and Malwa. The Jain carit kavya (caritu) described the exemplary lives of their protagonists. The prabandhas (produced extensively in Gujarat between the twelfth

50 Tales such as Sadhanu’s Pradyumna Carit (1354) did not substantially rework the source material, they merely introduced a distinctive resolution in order to produce a Jain emphasis. See R.S. McGregor, Hindi Literature from its Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century, in Jan Gonda ed. A History of Indian Literature ser., Vol. VIII Fasc. 6 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984) 34.

51 S.M. Pandey cites the instance of the eleventh century Sudansan Carit by Nayanand. See Pandey 1982, 80.
and sixteenth centuries) went further and constructed for the early medieval period, a 'historical' lineage of ideal kings who also conformed to Jain ethical norms. Birth as a Jain was not a necessary qualification for attaining this ideal. The Prabandhacintāmāni ascribes Jain virtues to some kings even though they are worshippers of Hindu deities. Instead, what makes for a perfect Jain king, is an “ideal of ceaseless self-elevation,” by which the Jain king “must strive for perfection just like an ascetic.”\(^52\) The Prabandhacintāmāni then not only extends the pantheon of Jain heroes by incorporating well-known kings into its fold, it also represents a Jain reworking of the genre of royal chronicle. The latter genre was conventionally concerned with defining the perfect king, and achieving that normative status for its royal patrons and their respective ancestries, Jain versions of the genre, with their emphasis on the moral history and destination of the individual, produced the figure of the perfect king who was also the perfect man.\(^53\) Arai argues that it is through this emphasis on moral self-improvement, that texts like the Prabandhacintāmāni reconcile the apparent discrepancy between the Jain norm of ahimsa and the king’s duty to fight and conquer his enemies (Arai 1998, 122).

By the late fifteenth century, the activities of a poet-scholar such as Kushallabh, point to an extension of the Jain role in the emerging literary culture of Rajasthan. This monk of the Khartar gaccha composed poems exclusively in Rajasthani. His peers were still composing in the traditional language of Jain literature and philosophy, Prakrit. The implications of this linguistic shift are borne out by the nature of Kushallabh’s poetic compositions. On the one hand, he composed poems such as the Tejśār Rās, the Agaddatt Rās, the Durga Saptaśati, the Jinapālita Jinarākṣīta Sandhi, and the Bhavāni Chand. Thus he made didactic material on traditional Jain protagonists and themes available in the local Rajasthani dialect. On the other hand, in 1559 he composed the Mādhavānal Caupai on the basis of a folk legend.\(^54\) He also compiled the scattered


\(^{53}\) Arai discusses the emergence of this norm in Gujarat. For an earlier period (between the fifth and tenth centuries A.D.), Dundas describes the emergence of a comparable Jain kingly norm in the south: ‘the idealized Jain king ... who owed his position to merit and moral qualities rather than to the ritual validation on which the Hindu king depended.’ Dundas 1992, 102.

\(^{54}\) For the writings of Kushallabh, see Lalas 1988, 128.
verses of the regional oral epic of Dhola and Maru, and cast them into a poetic narrative as the **Dholā Mārū rā Duḥā**. The two latter compositions are significant in that they do not necessarily belong with the trend of appropriating regional narratives into an overt Jain ethic. Rather, regional oral narratives were now being compiled and cast in textual form. These were autonomous of any immediate Jain didactic intention. Nevertheless, they were potentially available for such purposes. Jain monastic lineages also established large libraries (bhāṇḍārs) in the region, during this period, where such manuscripts were compiled and preserved. The facts thus point to increased Jain investment in the formation of a regional literary culture, which was not tailored exclusively to the well-defined demands of a Jain ethic.

Therefore, from the sixteenth century onwards, Jain literary production in the regional language can be classified as being of two kinds. Jain monks continued to compose the traditional exemplary narratives on subjects that were recognizably and exclusively Jain. The same writers now also composed verse narratives that were relatively autonomous of what has been described as the "Jain style" (shailī) in literary histories. Kushallabh's **Dholā Mārū rā Duḥā** and Hemratan and Labdodhay's Padmini poems belong to this second category. They do not follow a Jain narrative teleology, but recast regional narratives in a mode compatible with a Jain ethic.

In this, they are comparable with the Jain *prabandha kavyās* discussed by Arai. Such narratives point to the attempts of medieval Jain groups in this region, to negotiate the implications of a significant rise in political status. Such a rise in status may at times have created disjunctions with inherited ethical norms such as *ahimsa*. Within the larger field of Jain literary production, such texts were produced along with poems extolling more traditional virtues. The Jain poems about Padmini in late medieval Rajasthan can therefore be seen as following this established precedent. They attempt to accommodate the virtues of a Rajput queen and the heroism of Rajput chieftains within a Jain ethical framework. The need for such accommodation

---

56 The *bhāṇḍār* at Jaisalmer was established by Jinabhadra Suri in 1551. See Dundas 1992, 72.
57 See Lalas 1988 for one instance of this trend.
may have been generated by the close identification between Osval elite and ruling Rajput lineages, discussed above.

**History**

In the period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, the Rajput kingdoms were making the transition from clan-based polities to monarchical states. In the section on ‘Transitions in state formation,’ I explore how this transition was never complete and was always contested. Kings and chiefs sought to assert their respective rights, often mutually incompatible. The section on ‘Rajput patriarchy and the state’ examines how elite polygamy provided an alternative resource to the kings in this context. It provided them with military resources and a network of alliances to be used against refractory chiefs, and in the service of the Mughal emperor for upward mobility. The next section on ‘Pressures and contradictions in the Rajput order’ discusses how these structural features of Rajput polity generated conflict threatening the Rajput monarchical order as much as the external threat of imperial expansion.

**Transitions in state formation**

G D Sharma demonstrates the nature of the political transition in the Rajput kingdoms of late medieval Rajasthan, with reference to Marwar. In the initial period when the Rathors established their control over Jodhpur, “sons and brothers of the ruler were allowed to occupy the various territories conquered by them” as their thikānas. This practice was called bhai-bant because, “being members of the same clan, they believed that it was their share in a cooperative effort of the clan.” Under the practice of bhai-bānī “the bonds of political and moral obligation to render military service to the Raja was [sic] very weak and largely depended on the strength of the Raja and the good sense of the chieftains.”\(^{58}\) Primogeniture was not established as the principle of succession to kingship. “The most successful member of the ruling family was to be accepted as the head of the clan.” The choice of the king had to be confirmed by the chiefs, however (G.D. Sharma 1977, 9). In the mid-sixteenth century, Rao Maldeo of Jodhpur made an attempt to renegotiate the basis of his power and his relationship with his clansmen and chiefs. Seeking to

---

assert that a chief “was dependent for his position on the good-will of the Raja rather than on his inherent rights,” he began the practice of assigning land-revenue grants (pattā) in lieu of service rendered by the chiefs (G.D. Sharma 1977, 12). The assignment of new lands to chiefs in a period of territorial expansion had two consequences. First, the chiefs would have been readier to accept their new, contractual relations with the king, with an eye to the immediate material benefits. Secondly, the extended kinship network was implicated in the king’s drive towards territorial expansion by conquest. Kinship ties continued to guarantee clan status, security of landholdings, and access to resources. The revenue grantees belonged to the same families as the monarch’s clan network, and still claimed their right over their ancestors’ domains (G.D. Sharma 1977, 13).

The trajectory of Mevar in the late medieval period seems to have been comparable. The power of the Sisodia ruler of Mevar was also dependent upon support from his clan network. This was most obvious in deciding the issue of royal succession. Primogeniture was never completely accepted as the principle of inheritance: neither by brothers contending for the throne, nor by extended clan networks in accepting a successor, nor even by kings themselves in selecting their heirs. Succession struggles were peculiarly sharp in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Mevar. When Rana Kumbha was murdered by his son Udaisinh in 1473, the clan chiefs (nearest in kinship to the ruling lineage and with the largest landholdings) intervened and superseded the claims of Udai. Instead, they recognized Kumbha’s younger son Raimal as ruler. Raimal in turn disregarded the claims of his elder son Jai Singh, and a younger son Sanga succeeded as Rana in 1504. Alternatively, where the king nominated a younger son as heir, the chiefs could overturn the decision after the king’s death and accept the older son as the successor. Thus Pratap became the ruler in 1572, even though his father Udaisinh had nominated the younger son Jagmal as the heir.59

Loss of the chiefs’ support was a serious threat to a king’s authority. The chiefs withdrew this support during the reign of Vikramaditya (reigned 1531-35) and went away to their own thikanas. Some chiefs including Sanga’s nephew Narsinhdev (the king’s cousin) and Medini Rai

Purbiya of Chanderi,\(^6\) even went over to Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and helped him with information during his first siege of Chitor (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:27). The support of the chiefs continued to be vital throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the prolonged conflicts between Mevar and the Mughal empire.\(^6\) It was the chiefs who finally exerted pressure upon Amarsingh to negotiate for peace with Jahangir (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:234). Later, when Rajsingh waged battle against the wishes of his supporters, it is believed that he may have died by poisoning in 1680 (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:473).

The Sisodias achieved their first round of territorial expansion at around the same period as the Jodha Rathors in Marwar, during the reign of Kumbha (1433-1468). They established control for varying lengths of time, over territory under the control of rival lineages. Kumbha wrested control of Mandor and Marwar from the Rathors and defeated the Hadas of Bundi and the Devras of Abu. He also waged a series of campaigns against the Khalji Sultans of Malwa, and defeated the Muslim ruler of Nagaur (Shyamaldas 1986, 1:322-32). However, the control thus established through military campaigns against rival Rajput lineages was not decisive. The Rathors regained control of Marwar shortly. Even within Mevar, the Palvi Rajputs of Godwar district (around Kumbhalmer) did not accept Sisodia overlordship in the reign of Kumbha's successor Raimal (reigned 1473-1508); they had to be militarily subjugated.\(^6\)

As the Sisodias consolidated their hold over Mevar, other Rajput lineages began to look to them for aid. The Solankis of Toda came to Chitor when their ancestral lands were seized by Lalla Khan Pathan. They were granted the revenue assignment (patta) of Badnor. Subsequently, Raimal's son Prithviraj restored Toda to them after defeating the Pathan in a military campaign (Shyamaldas 1986, 1:347). Each such intervention increased the military resources of the Sisodias, since it brought such lesser lineages into relations of service and political alliance with

---

\(^6\) See Kolff 1990, for a fuller account of Medini Rai's career

\(^6\) This conflict began in the reign of Sanga (1508-27) and continued through the reigns of Pratap (1572-97), Amarsingh (1597-1620) and Rajsingh (1652-80).

\(^6\) Shyamaldas 1986, 1:344. Similarly, the Gauda ruler of Chanderi rebelled against the Rana, and had to be subjugated by military force. See Shyamaldas 1986, 1:355.
Mevar. The Sisodias gradually established their right, backed up by military threat, to arbitrate and settle claims over territory for increasing numbers of these lesser Rajput lineages.

The instances of Marwar and Mevar therefore indicate that the Rajput kingdoms in Rajasthan attempted to make the transition to monarchical polity in the period from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. In this emergent formation, the chiefs continued to assert periodically, their inherited rights based on kinship with the ruling lineage. In the reign of Amarsinh (1597-1620), Jhala Shatrusal, by virtue of being Rana Pratap’s sister’s son, treated his king Amarsingh as an equal. He left the service (naukri) of the Sisodias after an open confrontation with the Rana, and entered the service of Sursingh in Jodhpur instead (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:232). However, throughout this period, kinship and the rights of the subject vis a vis the sovereign were sought to be remodeled in consonance with emerging contractual relations which would become sharply defined with Mughal rule.

As Norman Ziegler points out, “while the institutions of rulership and clientship existed in Rajasthan prior to the Mughal period, they developed greatly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at the expense of kinship as a basis of organization.” It was therefore in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that “the first true Rajput ‘states’” emerged, in which there was “a defined and institutionalized locus of power (the local ruler), from whom regulations emanated with appropriate sanction and enforcement” (Ziegler 1998, 257). During the course of this transition, never complete, customary rights attaching to kinship coexisted (at least as a powerful horizon of expectations) with the emerging expectations and obligations of clientship. Throughout the period, local rulers attempted to consolidate their authority by

---

63 In Mevar, Ravat Surajmal (the grandson of Rana Mokal) and Ravat Sarangdev (the great-grandson of Rana Lakha) demanded and obtained landholdings from Rana Raimal (reigned 1473-1508) on this basis. They were forced to flee to Mandu when Raimal’s son Prithviraj challenged these land-grants and marched against them. Shyamaldas 1986, 1:347.

64 Shyamaldas 1986, 2:232


67 “Kinship and descent as principles of organization were operative primarily within the families of these rulers, in the determination of succession and rights to positions of authority, and in matters of inheritance. . . . Outside the immediate family of the ruler, clientship was the prime determinant of both access to land.
making grants of land and revenue assignments in lieu of services rendered.\(^{68}\) The evidence for Mevar also suggests that rulers whose authority was rendered tenuous among the old kinship-based chiefs, attempted to create a support base for themselves by creating new clients for themselves through a spate of such grants.\(^{69}\)

These parallel structures of relations between chiefs and king in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provide one context in which the Padmini narratives were produced in Rajasthan. In the new political order, rights to revenue were granted in lieu of service rendered. This new order was superimposed upon an older political order in which the reciprocal obligations of monarch, clansmen and chiefs were vaguely defined, where it had not always been possible for the monarch to impose his writ forcibly. At this conjuncture clan membership by itself did not guarantee the same prior access to resources and power. And exceptional service was rewarded, often with elevation to positions of influence deliberately rivaling those of the older clan-based chiefs. This was the conjuncture which saw the rise of the Osval Jains in Mevar, and which marks the ethic of the Osval Jain poems about Padmini. Hence their exaltation of sāmi dharam, of an absolute loyalty to king as patron and lord. This was an ethic whose renewed significance the kings of the period were keenly aware of. Through their patronage of such literary narratives, this was the ethic to which the Osval elite affirmed their commitment (in subtle contrast to the traditional clan-based Rajput chiefs).

**Rajput patriarchy and the state**

This fraught dynamic of contested obligations between kings and chiefs provides the context for the importance of elite polygamy among the Rajputs. Evolving patriarchal practices and to positions of authority. Clients as a body included not only Rajputs of the same clan and brotherhood as that of the ruler, but also other Rajputs from different clans and brotherhoods.” See Ziegler 1998, 256.

\(^{68}\) The *Amarakavyam* records such grants made by Rana Udaisinh (reigned 1537-1572) in Mevar: “He took Ajmer from the Pathans and gave it to Rav Sultan. Raja Bharmal of Amber sent his son Bhagvandas to the service (naukri) of the Maharana. He ... gave him [Surjan of Bundi] the kiledari of Ranthambhor, hundred villages of Phuliya and hundred villages of Kumbhalmer; he gave Gangrad, Bainsrod, Barod and Begam to Saindas; Ram Sah Tanvar the Raja of Gvaliar was given Barandor; Jaimal Rathor of Merta was given Badnor with a thousand villages; Gopalsinh Khichi ... and the raja of Abu used to serve him; Ransinh the elder son of Rav Maldev was given Kailva in *thikana* with a hundred villages.” Cited in Shyamaldas 1986, 2:87.

\(^{69}\) Thus Sagar’s creation of new nobility (*umrao* and *sardar*) at Chitor, when he was made a rival Rana to Amarsingh by Akbar. Shyamaldas 1986, 2:224.
provided alternate resources to rulers, but also inherently compounded tensions. Rajputs were divided into gotras (patrilineal clans) such as Rathor, Chauhan and Sisodia. The gotra, a broad kinship group possessed of a common ancestor, defined the boundaries of exogamy. Gotra exogamy and endogamy within a larger group eventually defined as caste, together created a powerful network of cross-clan political alliances in the region. These often transcended territorial boundaries between one Rajput kingdom and another. As Kumkum Sangari points out, the political history of the Rajput states including Mevar was one of ceaseless competitive warfare, a condition both of steady expansion and of insecurity. The constant warfare reinforced the mutual dependence between ruler and clan, and ruler and vassals. In this polity the notion of kul acquired added significance. The need for affirming lineage cohesion, genealogical status, and familial solidarity based on kinship, was persistent – since these were the coordinates of military success. However, the conquest of neighbouring territories provided the king and state with an economic and political advantage over kinsmen, and made relations between them tense and unstable (Sangari 1990, 1465). In this situation, political alliances cemented through marriage gradually came to play a distinctive role. The evolving pattern of matrimonial alliances reflected the changing political status of the Rajput clans in relation to each other. Thus when the Rathors of Marwar rose to prominence in the mid-fifteenth century, marriage alliances with them were keenly sought after. Similarly, with the entry of clans like the Shekhawat and Baghela into the mansabdari system of the Mughals, their increased prestige was reflected in the matrimonial arena as well.

The institution evolved in such a manner that the ruling family negotiated the balance of power within its own clan through exogamous marriages. These brought in for the ruler the allegiance and military support of other clans. The clans with whom marriage alliances were established were called sagas or genayats. They were often originally based in a different state

---

70 Some gotras evolved from the lineages of successful warriors, or from segments of ruling lineages, such as the Shaktawat and Chundawat in Mevar. Others such as Rathor and Sisodia, may point to a process where distinct ruling groups, of possible diverse origin in the early medieval history of the region, came to be amalgamated as various gotras into a single caste, from the fifteenth century onwards.

altogether, and therefore relatively independent of the intrigues for power within a particular Rajput state. In Mevar for example, “the main strength of the ruler came from the non-Sisodia chiefs, because the Shaktawats and Chundawats, the two main sub-lineages of the Sisodias, always posed problems for the ruler” (Joshi 1995, 15). The relative status of the bride’s family was often asserted through providing her with an entourage of chiefs, who relocated with her to her husband’s kingdom. Subsequent relations with the marrying king were always fraught. On the one hand the latter could use the chiefs related to his wife’s natal lineage, as a buffer against his own fractious chiefs and kinsmen. On the other hand, the power of the queen’s party was always a potential point of conflict between the king and the queen’s relatives. 72

The political compulsions driving clan exogamy impinged upon the status of the women through whom these political marriages were negotiated. They derived their status in the hierarchy of the marital household from the degree of power and prestige wielded by their natal clans. This stemmed from the military and political significance of the alliance they represented. Since the queens represented a political alliance, they often had access to independent incomes and/or estates. These were negotiated with more or less success during the marriage settlements, depending on the clout of the natal clans concerned. Thus as Ziegler points out, “women would continue to be referred to as sister (bai) or daughter (beti) of the brotherhood from which they had originally come” (Ziegler 1998, 232). The identification of sagās was so important that it figures in the genealogies, listing individuals as daughter’s son (dohit) or sister’s son (bhānej) (Joshi 1995, 44-5). The ties of sagā or those between maternal uncle and nephew (mama-bhānej) came into play not only against external enemies, they were also significant in succession disputes within a kingdom. Thus Udaisingh (the father of Rana Pratap) was aided in securing his rule over Mevar by his father-in-law’s clan, the Sonigaras of Pali in Marwar. Later, Man Singh Sonigara

72 A striking instance is the conflict between Suryamal Hada of Bundi, the brother of Karmavati, Rana Sanga’s queen, and his nephew Ratansingh, in early sixteenth-century Mevar. At the request of the queen, Sanga appointed her brother guardian of her two sons Vikramaditya and Udaisingh, and gave them control over Ranthambhor. When he succeeded Sanga, Ratansingh attempted to regain control over Ranthambhor, and this worsened relations between Suryamal and him. Ultimately the two died by each other’s hands. See Shyamaldas 1986, 1:362.
also helped his nephew Pratap seize the throne from his elder brother and father's nominated heir, Jagmal (Joshi 1995, 45).

It is clear that in this political order marriage was an institution integral to the maintenance and consolidation of state power. The polygamous family was the means by which military and political alliances were forged within an internally competitive ruling elite. The place of Rajput women was thus tied to the needs of clan identity and status, as the Rajput family entered into a series of relations with the Rajput state. As Sangari points out, exogamous marriage was "a structural mainstay of the clan as a political unit." It built "cohesive clan and inter-clan relationships across territorial boundaries," and constructed "relations of vassalage and clientelist allegiance," wherein marriage became "an expression of loyalty and fealty." Marriage relations were woven into "a system of gaining land, influence, power, honour, status and alliances" (Sangari 1990, 1466). Hence the patriarchal regulation of Rajput women was a matter of urgent concern to the ruling elite and to the state itself. This was articulated ideologically in an evolving code of Rajput 'honour.'

The two Rajasthani terms for the family, vans and kul, both suggest an emphasis on lineage, which is significant in a number of ways. One, lineage determined relative access to resources within the family itself. This was because membership in the natal clan continued to impinge upon the status of queens (and hence their progeny) in the marital household. Two, the emphasis on lineage foregrounded the kinship network, vital in mobilizing the widest possible political and military support for the ruler. Given that it was thus one of the fundamental units of Rajput polity, the idea of the kul was always invoked in terms of upholding its honour. This honour was the key concept in mobilizing the network of alliances underpinning the Rajput states. It was defined in terms of the fulfillment of obligations to spouses, immediate family, lineage and state.

For Rajput women honour was finally vested in their 'chastity.' This demanded sexual abstinence from the unmarried and monogamous fidelity to their husbands from married women. The term used was sat. The protection of this honour upheld the status of the conjugal unit, household, lineage and state. It is this continuity in obligations that was represented in medieval
Rajasthani texts in the trope of the honourable queen and wife, at once located within the elite household and within Rajput politics. For Rajput men on the other hand, honour was defined differently. It was vested in obligations to each of these distinct entities. Ideally these obligations were expected to overlap, so that loyalties to conjugal unit, household, lineage and state reinforced each other in a seamless continuum. Medieval Rajasthani texts point, however, to repeated disjunctions between these distinct obligations. Such disjunctions would suggest that in reality, the political ties and affiliations between the households of the Rajput elite and the Rajput state were constantly being tested, and perforce renegotiated and redefined.

Among the other political functions that marriage served, a girl was customarily offered as a token of political submission. Thus Rana Kumbha (reigned 1433-68) had conquered Hamirmagar and married its chief’s daughter (Shyamaldas 1986, 1:335). Similarly, the Rao of Sirohi offered his daughter in marriage to Abhai Singh of Jodhpur, after being defeated by him in 1730.73 Genealogies of the period reveal how the custom functioned as an index of a ruler’s status. Thus the seventeenth-century Sisod Vansavali exalts the status of Bapa Raval (now appropriated as the founder of the Sisodia lineage) by narrating how the rulers of Kanauj, Ujjain, Gujarat, Marwar, Sambhar and Delhi came and wedded their daughters to Bapa after being defeated in battle, and accepted his overlordship (pace lāgā).74 In the second half of the sixteenth century, Akbar embarked on a series of such political marriages, as a means of “building and consolidating local support.”75

Rajput daughters were given to Muslim rulers from at least the thirteenth century onwards, when there are instances involving the Ghuri and Tughlaq rulers of Delhi. As both Ziegler and Taft demonstrate, “obtaining a Muslim alliance by giving a daughter appears to have

73 Frances Taft Plunkett, “Royal Marriages in Rajasthan,” Contributions to Indian Sociology, 7 (1973) 70.
75 Taft 1994, 221. Taft documents 27 Mughal-Rajput marriages between 1562 and 1715, and it is quite likely that additional marriages have yet to be traced.
been an accepted tactic. The Rajput lineages of Rajasthan continued to exploit marriage alliances with the Mughals to their own advantage as well.

Marriage practices also played a role in defining the boundaries of an evolving caste. One instance was the emergence of restrictions on marriage, with widows, or with women who had been already married (nāītā). Neither of these were permissible for ruling families, although nāītā marriages did take place among non-ruling Rajputs, where such partners were called nārīrāyat. Again matrimony was not permissible between nārīrāyat and ruling Rajputs (Joshi 1995, 21).

Further restrictions developed, on marriages with Rajputs of the Hindustan region, who was considered inferior by birth and therefore rank. Internal stratification of lineages within the Rajputs in Rajasthan was thus accompanied by the creation of a hierarchy defined by ‘purity’ of blood and ‘antiquity’ of lineage, within which the Rajputs of the region were held to be superior to the upwardly mobile ‘Rajputizing’ groups in the Hindustan region. The practice of elite polygamy was thus centrally implicated in the emergence of a stratified Rajput ‘caste.’ On the basis of such hierarchies, rulers in Rajasthan began claiming for themselves the power to arbitrate on status claims within the Rajput landholding class. The heightened investment in ideologies of ‘purity’ of lineage, enforced through patterns of matrimonial alliance, thus accentuated the Rajput state’s authority to regulate the composition of its elite base.

**Pressures and contradictions in the Rajput order**

Varsha Joshi demonstrates how succession disputes were intrinsic to medieval Rajput polity, given this system of polygamous marriages. The competition between co-wives from different clans frequently articulated itself as contests between the queens on behalf of their minor sons. These were contests in which the queens used the status and resources of their natal clans.

---


77 The first Rajputs to make marriage alliances with the newly emergent Muslim (i.e. Mughal) dynasty, Bhai Mal Kachvaha and Mertiya Rathor Jagmal Viramdevot, “were seeking support for their efforts to gain or retain lands.” Taft 1994, 226.

78 Thus when Amar Singh of Kerara thikana in Mevar married into a Rajput family of Uttar Pradesh, his jagir of Kerara was confiscated by the Rana of Udaipur. It was restored on a hefty fine of Rs. 11,000 only when the Jaipur ruler dined with the girl’s father from the same plate, to prove that they were Rajputs of equal status. See Joshi 1995, 52.
The competition was intensified by the fact that the mother of the heir had the highest position as pah-rani (chief queen) in the zenana hierarchy. She enjoyed special privileges even after the death of her husband, as the mother of the new ruler. Further, the first wife or the pre-eminent wife was not always the first queen to produce a son (Joshi 1995, 64). Hence the oldest son did not necessarily have the backing of the most powerful kinship alliance. There are also several instances of powerful clans demanding as precondition for a matrimonial alliance, the succession to kingship of the son from the proposed marriage (Joshi 1995, 66). Chronic disputes over succession were thus inherent in the Rajput political order at this conjuncture.

These contradictions gained a distinct edge in the late sixteenth century. This was the historical moment when Akbar's intervention in the politics of the Rajput kingdoms fundamentally changed the nature of relations between king and chiefs. Akbar firmly established his prerogative "to exercise the right of granting the gaddi of Jodhpur" to a nominee of his choice, albeit from within the ruling clan. The Mughal emperor thus asserted his sovereignty over Marwar. This development had several contradictory results. On the one hand, the support of the chiefs was no longer necessary for succession to kingship. Confirmation by the emperor sufficed. The king thus became more independent of the support of his chiefs. On the other hand, the Rathor chiefs could now approach the Mughal emperor, as the ultimate arbiter in issues of landholding, control and succession within their kingdom (G.D. Sharma 1977, 16-18).

Although the Mughal emperor never won the right of deciding the succession to the throne in Mevar, Sisodia chiefs did approach him as a rival (if not always superior) authority to their king. This resulted in some dilution of the Mevar king's authority over his chiefs, over the course of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Sisodia kings evolved their own responses to combat this weakening of authority. During the reign of Pratap, his younger brother Jagmal appealed to Akbar to intervene, upon being rejected by the chiefs as his father's heir. The emperor bestowed upon him the pargana of Jahazpur (bordering Bundi and Jaipur, in the eastern corner of Udaipur within the territory of Mevar) in jagir (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:146). Such a move

79 Several of Pratap's younger brothers left Mevar to become Mughal mansabdars. See Taft 1994, 228.
would have asserted Akbar’s ability to intervene in the affairs of Mevar at two levels. Not only could he bestow a *jagir* upon the brother of the Mevar king, he could assign a grant within the territory of Mevar, and enforce the grant with military support.80 Between 1567 and the end of the Mughal emperors’ reigns, several localities (pargana) of Mevar were repeatedly confiscated by the Mughals and included in the province (suba) of Ajmer. At some junctures, the Mevar rulers controlled these localities. At other times the imperial forces captured them. On still other occasions, the emperors bestowed these localities upon the Mevar ruler or upon other Rajput chiefs, as a mark of their favour.81

Akbar also attempted to assert his influence in deciding who would rule Mevar, but with somewhat less success than in Marwar. Jagmal’s son Sagar, (nephew of Rana Pratap) found his way to the imperial court through the offices of Raja Mansingh of Amber. He had withdrawn from Chitor after a disagreement with his cousin Rana Amarsingh. After defeating the Devras of Sirohi at Akbar’s behest, Sagar was rewarded with the title of Rana of Mevar, and asked to subjugate its other ruler Amarsingh (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:221). Sagar took his appointment seriously, and began displaying his royal insignia at Chitor. He also began creating new chiefs at Chitor from among the Sisodia Rajputs, by making fresh revenue and land-grants. However, Sagar had limited success. The land under cultivation in Mevar was appropriated to the imperial revenue (*khālisa*), and the hills remained in the control of Amarsingh, who gradually began to re-establish his control over the kingdom (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:221-24).

After the treaty between Amarsingh and Jahangir, the heir to the Mevar throne Karnsingh presented himself at the imperial court, like his peers from the other Rajput kingdoms. From this point onwards, due ceremonial gifts arrived from the emperor ratifying the Mevar succession. These were accepted before the customary gifts from other Rajput rulers and chiefs (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:269).

---

80 In Pratap’s reign, Akbar had installed strong garrisons in Untala, Mohi, Madaria, Chitor, Mandal, Mandalgarh, Jahazpur, Mandsaur and other places within the territory of Mevar. Shyamaldas 1986, 2:163.
81 These included the parganas of Pur, Mandal, Khairabad, Mandalgarh, Jahazpur, Savar, Phulia, Baneda, Hurda and Badnor among others. Shyamaldas 1986, 2:414.
The career of Mertiya Rathor Jaimal Viramdevot, who died leading the defence of Chitor against Akbar, best reveals the nature of Mughal intervention in Rajasthan and the range of Rajput responses to it.

Jaimal had recovered Merta, the family patrimony, with Mughal assistance in 1562 but lost it to his brother Jagmal in the following year when Akbar, suspecting Jaimal of disloyalty, threw his support to Jagmal. Jaimal and a brother than took service with the rana of Mevar, to whom they were related by marriage. After Jaimal’s death, the overriding concern of his sons and nephews was to regain Merta. Within a year or two of the Mughal victory at Chitor, a nephew had joined the Mughal service and married a sister to the emperor. At least two of Jaimal’s sons followed their cousin’s lead in accepting service under Akbar, and one of them later married a daughter to Salim in the (ultimately successful) effort to persuade the emperor to grant Merta to them (Taft 1994, 228).

In the seventeenth century, the rulers of Mevar gradually began re-asserting their control over smaller neighbouring principalities such as Dungarpur, Banswara and Sirohi. The rulers of these localities had entered Mughal service and broken away from Sisodia domination. Raval Samarsi of Banswara was defeated in a military expedition led by Bhagchand (Labdodhay’s patron), and paid a tribute of two lakhs (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:321). Rajsingh revived an old custom of ḍūka āud, looting an enemy’s territory in order to ratify his accession and assert his sovereignty. He looted the imperial garrisons of Khairabad, Mandal and Dariba and stationed his own contingents there. Similarly, the zamindars of Banera were subjugated and tribute was exacted (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:414). By the second half of the seventeenth century, therefore, the Sisodias were aggressively re-asserting their pre-eminence in the region, through a sustained policy of military action against smaller Rajput principalities and calculated opposition to the Mughal emperor. This was counter-balanced by conciliatory gestures whenever they were faced with the threat of Mughal retaliation.82

82 As Shyamaldas notes of Jagatsinh, the latter adopted a conciliatory note every now and then, and sent gifts and men / military levies (jamaiat) in the service (naukri) of the emperor. If there was more uproar in the imperial court, he would send his eldest son to effect a reconciliation. But as soon as Rajsinh became the ruler, he began acting firmly. 1986, 2:402.
It is this ongoing political tussle between the rulers of Mevar and the Mughal emperors for regional dominance that provides the context for Sisodia attempts at asserting their pre-eminence – around re-constructed definitions of community and caste identity, focused around re-fashioned patriarchal norms and against new definitions of the enemy.

Jagatsingh's reign saw a spurt in construction activity. The building of new palaces and temples, as well as new and increased grants of charity and religious endowments, offered a tried and tested avenue for the symbolic consolidation of Sisodia authority (G.N. Sharma 1962, 151). Support for temple-building activities outside the Mevar territories points to attempts at establishing the ideological pre-eminence of the Sisodia Rajputs at a supra-regional level. The most visible marker of Mevar's resurgent fortunes came at the end of Jagatsingh's reign, when he repaired the ruins of Chitor. This breach of the treaty with the Mughals induced Shahjahan to invade Mevar once again during the reign of his successor, Rajsinh. Chitor clearly retained its enormous symbolic significance.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, Rajsingh (reigned 1652-1680) "consciously cultivated Mevar's reputation as the defender of Rajput tradition and Hindu dharma" (Taft 1994, 230). According to the Mevar chronicles, this project seems to have found wider acceptance in the region. Thus in a dispute over precedence between the rulers of Jodhpur and Udaipur when they went to marry daughters of Rav Shatrusal of Bundi, the latter is believed to have intervened in favour of Rajsingh: "The Rana of Udaipur is known as Hindvā surya, and even in the time of the Musalman emperors, it is due to him that our honour / religion (dharm) has been preserved; else the emperor would have made everybody a Musalman" (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:443). It was also in the reign of Rajsingh that the Vallabha sampraday idol of Krishna was brought from Braj to Nathdvara in Mevar. The Mevar chronicles again narrate the event as proof of Rajsingh's defence of the faith against the persecutions of Aurangzeb.83

It is in the realm of Mughal-Rajput marriages that such issues of Rajput identity and honour were mobilized most consistently, around newly articulated notions of 'purity' and

---

83 Rajsingh is reported to have said, "When the heads of one lakh Rajputs of mine are cut off, then Alamgir will be able to lay hands on this idol." Shyamaldas 1986, 2:453.
'pollution' of caste and community. This may have been a response to the sheer frequency with which such marriages were negotiated as a mechanism for sealing and consolidating political alliances. One of the most frequently cited instances involves Rajsingh again, and his marriage to Charumati, the Kishangarh princess. Rajput sources suggest that her father arranged his daughter's betrothal without her consent. The Mevar chronicles recount that she appealed to Rajsingh, who obliged by marrying her. To avoid offence to Aurangzeb, the Kishangarh ruling family then substituted a younger sister who was married to Aurangzeb's son Mu'azzam (Taft 1994, 235, fn. 7). Mevar accounts however use the episode to reflect on the character of Aurangzeb, as well as assert their opposition to such Mughal-Rajput alliances. Aurangzeb is literally demonized as the asura, the malecha pśāch with the appearance of a monkey (langur), from whom the Hindu lord (hindu dhāraṇi) must rescue the princess. Later sources embellish Charumati's plea to Rajsingh: "When the evil Sisupal threatened to marry Rukmini the daughter of Raja Bhishm, then Shri Krishna came from Dvarika at the request of Rukmini, defeated Sisupal and brought Rukmini away. In the same way, rescue me from the clutches of the Musalman emperor Alamgir, and preserve my honour (dharm) and my life, and wed me" (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:439).

By the early eighteenth century, this opposition to Rajput-Mughal alliances was articulated more formally. Amarsingh II of Mevar (reigned 1698-1710) married his sister and daughter to the rulers of Jodhpur and Jaipur respectively, in 1708. "At this time, he extracted a written commitment from the two rulers, that they would not now marry their daughters to the Turks under any circumstances" (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:437). And by the nineteenth century, this was the understanding retrospectively imposed on all the Muslim-Rajput alliances of the medieval past. It was now assumed that the Rajputs had always "considered marrying their daughters to the emperors a diminution of their honour (izzat)." Further, while it is accepted that "the emperor Akbar had initiated this custom (rasm) out of political considerations (rafniti)," it is now argued

---

84 It is interesting that Mevar's prolonged conflicts with Malwa and the Gujarat Sultans in the fifteenth century did not trigger off the same anxieties as its conflict with the Mughals.
that even by the time of Jahangir, “the real intention behind such an edict was that beautiful girls could be inducted into the imperial harem” (Shyamaldas 1986, 2:437). Interpretations such as these found support in the changed climate of the Mughal court. “The presence of Hindu wives and their entourages in the harems of Akbar and his sons had a significant impact. The women were allowed to maintain their own customs and religious observances” (Taft 1994, 222-23). By Aurangzeb’s time, however, “Hindu wives were formally converted to Islam, an unmistakable indication of the transition that had taken place” (Taft 1994, 223).

This is the context of the Padmini narratives in late medieval Rajasthan, all dating to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (with the exception of Hemratan’s poem). These narratives focus on the relationship between king and chiefs. Further, they mobilize norms of honourable conduct around perceptions of threat to the order. And the threat is directed at what is constructed as the heart of Rajput polity. This is the figure of the queen who embodies in herself the network of political alliances that underpin the king’s power, as well as the norms of ‘honourable’ conduct that are asserted to be essential to the maintenance of this political and moral order.

**The narratives of Padmini: Kings and chiefs**

Accounts of the Padmini episode figure in several of the Mevar chronicles that were produced directly under royal patronage. Muhta Nainsi’s narrative, compiled from the oral traditions of the Carans and Bhatsthat were available to him, is as follows:

Ratansi was the son of Ajaisi and brother of the warrior/chief Lakhamsi. In the matter of Padmani Lakhamsi and Ratansi were killed fighting with Alavadin. After the Patsah had departed, they called him back from his encampment at Udaipur. Each son of Lakhamani descended from the fort and fought for twelve days. On the thirteenth day they had *juhar* performed and the Ranas Lakhamani and Ratansi were killed. The warrior/chief Lakhamsi, Ratansi and Karan, all three brothers were killed in fierce encounters at the entrance to the fort. The warrior Lakhamsi’s son Anatsi was married to [the princess of] Jalor, he died fighting with Kanadde, and that hill [where he died fighting] is remembered in Jalor. Arsi was killed with them [Ratansi and Lakhamsi]. His son Rana Hamir ruled at Chitor for sixty-
four years, seven months and one day. Only Ajaisi had been told to leave before the fierce
encounters at the entrance to the fort [to preserve the lineage – ed. note].

The account in the eighteenth-century Raval Ranaji ri Vat is of the same length, and
recounts in “The matter of Rana Ratansiji and Hamirji” (Vāt Rana Ratānsi ji Hamir ji ri), that
the Patsah Alavadin Gori Pathan from Delhi came and attacked Chitrakot, in order to obtain
Padmini who was in Rana Ratansihji’s home. Twelve sons, five brothers, uncles and
countless Rajputs, officials of the state (kāmdār), traders (vepāri), brahmins and [the men of]
many other castes (kehi jār) were killed by the sword. The women committed jauhar (lugāyā
jhamar chaḏhī). The fort was taken over, and then the Patsah returned to Dilli, and gave the
fort to Sonigara Malde. The Sonigaras ruled over the fort for thirty-five years. Rana Ajaisi
was removed from the fort in order to preserve the lineage.

The late seventeenth-century Sisod Vansāvali added details that it obviously considered
significant. Thus Likhamsi Rano’s title of Shri Gadh Māṇḍalik (conqueror of fortresses) is
mentioned.

He was the son of Rathor Lal Bai. He lived in Kelvara. He ascended the throne in Samvat
1331. He ruled for fifteen years, three months and four days. Along with five thousand horse,
three hundred elephants, five thousand foot-soldiers (pāyak), two hundred drummers and
buglers (vājitra), four kings, five Raos, three Ravats, seven brothers and twelve sons, he was
killed in the fort. Ratansi Raval had wedded Padmani the daughter of Raja Hamir Sekh
Chahuwan; the Rana Mandalik Lakhamsinh had given a written assurance [that she would be
protected] and they had brought her to Chitor. To keep his word, he came to Chitor and was
killed with twelve sons. And one who was wedded to [the daughter of the ruler of] Jalor was
killed there . . . In the royal household (rajlok) of Rana Gadh Mandalik Lakhamsinh there
were twenty-seven queens and fourteen sons. [The fourteen sons are named in three couplets
that end by praising the fort of Chitor, blessed with such heroes]. The ruler of Kachh, Avala

86 Sisodiyari Khyat, in Muhta Nainsi ri Khyat, ed. Badariprasad Sakariya, 4 vols., 1960 (Jodhpur: Rajasthan
The Gahila Raval Karan [not clear who this is] could not defeat the Rajputs of Gujarat, his prince Shri Lakhamsinh killed them. [This is how] he became known as Gadh Mandalik [the conqueror of forts] . . . Gadh Mandalik Lakhamsi brought with him the kuldevi Bāyan Mata, of Rav Karan Solanki the lord of Gujarat. He established her shrine [and his kingdom] at Kelvara. Earlier he used to worship [the goddess] Ambav . . . [The goddess] Vāyan appeared to the king in a dream, and indicated the place for her shrine at Kelvara.88

These accounts in the emerging historiographical genres of bat, khyat and vansāvali are similar in structure. They are concerned with the lineage of the Mevar rulers, its achievements and its continuity. These concerns bring about a consistent emphasis on two sets of details. First, they assert Lakhamsi's valour in defending the fort to his death, which the vansāvali accentuates by citing an earlier pledge to defend Padmini. This is an element of the Padmini narratives that also appears in some of the poetic versions (Amarakavīyam, Canto 7, verse 12). Secondly, the khyat and vansāvali provide an explanation for the continuity of the lineage by insisting on the survival of one son. The figure of Padmini is thus merely a pretext for these other, primary concerns. As discussed above, these emerging historiographical genres were produced under royal patronage. They were concerned with the legitimation of Rajput kingship in the region, and they evolved their own conventions for reconstructing the past in a manner consistent with this agenda. All the Mevar 'histories' locate the origins of the late medieval Sisodia rulers as a junior branch of the Guhila (Gahlot) kings of Chitor. These chronicle traditions locate the segmentation of the Guhila lineage some generations before the fall of Chitor to Alauddin Khalji. Thus they assert a continuity of lineage between what may actually have been two disparate ruling lineages, separated by about half a century after the Khalji victory over Chitor.

Contemporary evidence about the ruling lineage of Mevar is sketchy, until the reign of Hammir in the late fourteenth century. This contributes to the haziness about Ratansen. In some of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century chronicles discussed here, he is not even the ruler of

Chitor, but a younger brother and lesser chief under the king Lakhamsen. The *Amarakavyam* elaborates on this scenario. The seventh canto (dealing with the sack of Chitor by Alauddin Khalji) begins by celebrating the victories and conquests of the king of Chitor, Lakshmasimha. His younger brother Ratnasi is merely biding his time at Chitrakut. Ratnasi eventually joins the service of the *mleccha* king of Mandav, who receives him with honour (7.8). Ratnasi serves his new overlord well, killing two of the latter's enemies and presenting their heads to the king of Mandav. In return, the *mleccha* king rewards him with great wealth and with the fort of Chitrakut (7.9), and bestows on him the title of Raval (7.10). Then Ratnasi goes to Sinhaladvip and asks its king for the hand of his daughter Padmini. The Rana Lakshmasimha also gives a written undertaking that Padmini will be protected from the danger of the Yavanas (7.12).

When Alauddin Khalji first lays siege to Chitor on hearing of Padmini's presence there, he is repulsed by the valour of Gora, Badal and their warriors. The *Amarakavyam* then details further triumphs for Lakshmasimha, not for Ratnasi. When Alauddin ultimately returns and lays siege to the fort for twelve years, Lakshmasimha and Ratnasi are both killed in battle. The continuity of the lineage is established through Lakshmasimha's sons, however, rather than Ratnasi's sons. This account in the *Amarakavyam* suggests that the figure of the king who was unable to defend his kingdom could not be celebrated in the royally patronized 'histories' of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Mevar. The figure of Ratansen would seem to be accommodated only to re-construct the first fall of Chitor. This was an event resonant in the historical memory of late medieval Mevar, given the decisive impact of Akbar's sack of Chitor.

Ambivalence about the figure of the defeated king who lost the kingdom is shared by the Jain poems. However, it is articulated differently. As Hemratan indicates in his invocation, his tale is focused upon the virtuous (*gūṇi*) Gora Ravat and the strong Badil (verse 7). In contrast to these two truthful (*sattavant*) and enlightened (*savivek*) heroes (*be gūṇi*), the king is characterized as somewhat gullible, deceived by a huge trick (*atti chek*) (verse 8). Thus the king is relegated to secondary status in the Jain poems as well. It is the Ravats Gora and Badal, who win fame (*jeas*) throughout the earth (*vasūhā hūrā vikhyāḥ*) by defending Chitrakot in battle (*yuddha*). This is the matter (*vāt*) that the poet recounts in his tale (verse 9). Hemratan's invocation ends at this point.
without having mentioned Padmini at all; the beautiful queen and her shadowy husband are reduced to being pretexts, literally, in a tale about the valour of the Ravats Gora and Badal.

Labodhwaj provides a slightly longer description of the king at the start of his poem.

Ratansen is foremost among all rulers (sab rāi mai sirmaur), whom no other king can match (jā sam bhūp na aur). Such is his illustrious reputation (tej pratāp) that evil men (durjan) flee, just as darkness flees with the rise of the sun. The comparison of the king to the sun gains added force from its being the royal insignia of the Sisodias. Ratansen’s edicts are law on earth (avichal agyā avani pari), as he is just and fearless (nyāy nipūñ nirbhik). He is the destroyer of the enemy’s elephants (arigaj bhanjan kesari), the defender of the kshatriya path (khatrīval). In his court are two lakh proud warriors ready to serve him (subhaṭ khaḍā sevā karai). Countless horses, elephants, chariots, foot soldiers and cavalry stand ready for battle day and night, and all other rulers submit before him. While this is an extended description, it is still an entirely conventional catalogue of the required attributes of kingship. When compared with the elaborate celebration of the exploits of the chiefs Gora and Badal, the description of the king is bare, and only just conforms to the requirements of literary and political decorum within the conventions of courtly narratives.

In the Jain poems, Ratansen’s quest for Padmini is triggered off by a quarrel with his favourite queen over food. Such motives are precluded by their very nature from genealogies engaged in constructing heroic lineages for kings. The central character’s leaving a meal in a huff on being taunted by a female relative, and embarking on a quest, is a motif more familiar in oral epics such as Pabuji and Bagadavat. Its deployment in the Padmini poems may indicate the familiarity of the Jain poets with non-Rajput regional narratives. It may also point to the wider-than-Rajput audience for the Jain poems. In the context of a Rajput heroic frame however, the quest of the king in these Padmini poems is not geared to issues of control over territory or sovereignty, but is about a domestic challenge to his authority by his wife. The contrast with Gora and Badal as they define heroic norms in defending their queen, honour and kingdom, is notable.

\(^{89}\) Another manuscript substitutes arjan, enemies, for durjan.
Ratansen now vows to wed and bring home a Padmini woman, or else to spend the rest of his life in mountain caves (Hemratan verse 40). Eagerly looking forward to success in his quest (\textit{khitipati mani ati lāgī khanti}) (Hemratan verse 39), the king leaves the city secretly on horseback, with one lone attendant (\textit{khavās}) and with much treasure. The contrast with Jayasi’s \textit{Padmavat} is notable. There, sixteen thousand princes join the king as news of his impending departure spreads. I have discussed the cultural resonance of that journey and its outcome in the context of medieval Hindustan, in Chapter 1. The evolution of Rajput identity in late medieval Rajasthan, and its role in underpinning the domination of regional Rajput elites, would prevent the ascription of Rajput status to such large numbers of followers in an expedition. Moreover, at this historical moment (in the late sixteenth century), the Rajputs of Rajasthan did not yet recognize participation in the military campaigns of the Delhi emperor as the conventional avenue for upward mobility. Thus Hemratan does not cast the king’s journey as a military expedition, and his Jain successors follow his precedent.

Further, the winning of a queen in marriage is not seen in the context of success in tests of heroism or in military campaigns. Thus Ratansen is accompanied only by a nameless attendant, not by chiefs of stature. His ultimate success results from his stature as the king of Mevar rather than his personal prowess. As discussed earlier, marriages amongst this regional Rajput elite were matters of intensive political negotiation between clans, in which the personal qualities of a prospective groom were immaterial. Narratives such as the late seventeenth-century \textit{Rajvilas} clearly demonstrate this understanding. In this poem, Shatrusal (the Hada chief of Bundi) decides to marry his daughter to the prince Rajsingh of Mevar, because of the status of his father the Rana Jagatsingh: throughout the earth there is no other king as eminent (canto 3, verse 16). He selects the Jodhpur prince as a match for his second daughter, for similar reasons (canto 3, verse 55). The personal heroism of the potential bridegroom is not relevant in either of these instances.

To return to Hemratan’s poem, Ratansen’s journey is preceded by the necessary renunciation. This renunciation that is meaningless, unless it is accompanied by suffering (Hemratan verse 44). Such epigrammatic formulations may echo Jain monastic ethics. They sit
uneasily however, upon the quest of Ratansen for a Padmini woman, an endeavour in which neither the immediate means nor the ultimate goal is directed towards ascetic renunciation.

Ratansen also does not seem to know where such a Padmini woman can be found. He intends to search all over the earth (avanti), and hopes to find someone who will tell him where he can obtain her. Again the quest seems to be incompletely fleshed out, as the journey is initially directionless, it is only in a vague southward direction (maram pakhe) (Hemratan verse 44). This is in contrast to the well-defined route in the Padmavat, from Chitor to the coast of Orissa through the Dandakaranya forest, and sea voyage to Singhaldvip. Once again, journeys and routes that would have been familiar to the elite and upwardly mobile military groups in Hindustan who constituted Jayasi’s audience, would not be resonant for the Rajasthani Rajput and Jain elites to whom Hemratan and his successors addressed their poems.

In the Rajasthani Jain points, it is Ratansen’s kingly status that shapes his negotiations with the ruler of Sanghaldvip. In Jayasi’s poem, he was disguised as a Nath yogi, was imprisoned and almost lost his life before his identity was finally revealed. That trajectory, as argued in Chapter 1, encoded some of the risks involved in the pursuit of upward mobility by the Rajput and Rajputizing elites of Hindustan. Here, by contrast, Ratansen’s quest is not in pursuit of upward mobility. His status is not dependent upon marriage with Padmini. Ratansen’s appearance points to his kingly status: “Handsome as the god of love, and dressed attractively, this is some powerful king” (Hemratan verse 82). In fact, the precise stakes involved in this quest are never clarified. Ratansen does not don the guise of a Nath yogi (as he did in the Padmavat). Instead, he is literally flown through the air to the island of Sanghal, by a Nath yogi with miraculous powers (the latter vanishes after performing this task). The presence of otherwise redundant figures such as this Nath yogi, may point to some acquaintance with Jayasi’s poem.

Padmini has decided that she will marry only some one who can defeat her brother (Hemratan verse 71). The king of Sanghal decides on a game of chess as the test for prospective bridegrooms (Hemratan verse 73). All the Rajasthani Jain poems follow Hemratan’s precedent and take up this narrative trope. The game of chess may well operate as a deflection of the possibility of real battle (suggested by Hemratan in passing), as the precondition for the winning
of Padmini. Such tests of skill are also familiar from many other narrative traditions on the
subcontinent. As discussed earlier, kings defeated in battle customarily offered their daughters in
marriage to their victorious opponents. In these poems, Ratansen’s victory in the game of chess
establishes his superiority over the king of Sanghal. The winning of Padmini in marriage, with
half the Sanghal king’s treasury and half his kingdom as dowry (Hemratan verse 84), confirms the
pre-eminent status of the lord of Chitor.

This status is spelt out most clearly in the Chitor Udaipur Patnama composed by the
Barva Bhat genealogists of the Mevar Ranas. Here Ratansen states his superiority in so many
words, to Padmini’s father Samansi: “I have no hunger for half your kingdom; I have so many
jagirdars, who are the equal of your entire kingdom of Sidhal; one hundred jagirdars; so I have no
desire for your kingdom” (fol. 100 b). And again, “I rule over so large a kingdom, which Rao
would have gifted it away to me; the fort of Chitor is one among ten thousand villages; and I have
a hundred other forts, equal to such a fort of Chitor” (Patnama, fol. 101 a).90 Elsewhere Ratansen
also indicates that his quest for Padmini is comparable to his thirteen other marriages, all of which
indicate his network of political alliances: “I had fourteen queens originally; now, by nature’s
will, there are five queens left; now there are very few queens . . . how can I go around wedding
the daughters of kings [because of this shortfall in the number of queens]” (Patnama fol. 106b,
p.388).

Once the quest is completed and Ratansen returns to Chitor with Padmini, he does not
have much of a role left to play in the Rajasthani Jain poems. These poems have him expel the
Brahman Ragho Chetan for violating the rules of purdah in the palace. The latter then brings the
emperor of Delhi Alauddin Khalji to Chitor, in revenge. The battle is inconclusive, and Alauddin
offers terms that Ratansen first refuses, and then accepts: a glimpse of Padmini as she serves the
emperor a meal. Ratansen is then tricked by Alauddin and captured. Hemratan contrasts the
malice of Alauddin with the guilelessness of Ratansen (verse 337), and compares the capture of
the king to the eclipse of the sun by Rahu (Hemratan verse 339) – again, an image that gains in

90 My translations. See appendix for complete translation of the Padmini episode in the Chitor Udaipur
Patnama.
power because the sun was the Sisodia emblem. All that is left for Ratansen to do, is to rebuke Badal for his plan to surrender Padmini to Alauddin, in exchange for himself (Hemratan verse 550), and then be rescued in a palanquin. He watches the battle between Alauddin and the forces of Gora and Badal from the safety of the fort, and then rewards Badal for his bravery (Hemratan verses 584-85).

It should be clear from this discussion of the Rajasthani Padmini narratives, that the figure of the king who was defeated and lost his kingdom, is the object of considerable unease. However, Ratansen is partially recuperated in some of these accounts through his prior status as the ruler of Chitor, and therefore as the bearer of a ‘Rajput’ honour and status.

In contrast to this fraught figure of the king, the chiefs Gora and Badal define the heroic norm in the Hemratan tradition. Hemratan indicates in his invocation, that the conventional nine rasas are being redefined in this *katha*. After enumerating the conventional rasas of *vīrā*, *sīngār* and *hūsā* for the edification (*hita hej*) of the audience, he asks that they pay special heed to the rasa of *sāmi dharam*, the essence of duty to one’s lord, by which the listener will also gain the luster of honour (*tej*) (Hemratan verse 5). The next couplet locates this new rasa in the context of the conventional rasas:

He who preserves *sāmi dharam*, the essential *vīrā* rasa,

[He] is the ultimate norm (*sīma*) amongst warriors, defending the honour of the *kshatriya* path (*khiśivat*) (Hemratan verse 6).

*Sāmi dharam* is thus exalted to the position of the most important rasa in this *katha*. It is this norm that is exemplified in the figures of the virtuous Goru Ravat and the strong Badil, upon whom therefore the tale is focused (verse 7). A political relationship of loyalty to one’s employer, lord and master is articulated here as an ethical obligation, as an individual’s *dharma*. This is an idiom familiar enough in the late-medieval world of the poem. Hemratan articulates this moral obligation as an aesthetic norm as well: through the definition and celebration of *sāmi dharam* as *rasa*, the tale is intended to produce aesthetic pleasure by means of its didactic value.

In the Rajasthani Jain poems, Gora and Badal make their first entry only after the king is captured and the assembly of chiefs has decided to surrender the queen to Alauddin. The chiefs
are not mentioned during either during the first siege of the fort, or during the negotiations that result in the entry of the emperor into Chitor. Within the narrative this is explained by their having quarreled with Ratansen and withdrawn from his active service:

They were angry with the Rao, they refused to accept any grants (grās) from the king. They stayed in their homes and did not perform any service (chākri), they left Ratansen and turned away to be free . . . . They did not leave [but] they still looked after their own expenses [that is, they were not maintained by the king] (Hemratan verses 367-69).

This prior quarrel between the king and his chiefs serves more than one purpose. First, it suggests that such a quarrel was a distinct possibility, even perhaps a frequent occurrence, in the Rajput states in which these Jain poems are located. Secondly, the fact of the quarrel serves to further exalt the heroism of the chiefs, since they are described as coming to the rescue of their king in spite of their difference of opinion with him. They are “exceptionally loyal to their lord” (sāmi dharama pālaṁ saviseṭa) (Hemratan verse 371). Thirdly, since the quarrel with the king serves as a device preventing the entry of the two chiefs earlier in the narrative, it establishes their close symbolic relationship with the situation of captive king, queen and therefore kingdom in danger. The chiefs are thereby made the saviors of the kingdom, virtually replacing the king in this symbolic function.

Similar impulses govern the invocation of epic ancestries for the chiefs Gora and Badal, and for the fort and realm they defend. The Jain poets are alive to the gains of retaining Sanskritic terminology. Thus, the fort defended by Gora and Badal is referred to as Chitrakut (thus aligning itself with its epic predecessor). All kinds of creatures (sura, nara, kinnara) have their abode in it, and Rama spent his years of exile here (Hemratan verse 10). All the Jain poems liken Badal to Hanuman. In Hemratan’s poem, Badal reassures an anxious Padmini, “I will destroy the enemy’s army single-handed, I will cut off their king’s head. As Hanamati achieved Rama’s tasks, I will overcome your distress” (Hemratan verse 404). The battle between the chiefs and Alauddin’s army is liked to the battle of the Mahabharata (Hemratan verse 571), so fierce that “Siva

---

91 See also Labdodhay, 2 for the same epic parallel.
92 See also Labdodhay p. 71, p. 94; Dalpativijay, 2569, 2853; Jatmal, 100; and Bhagyavijay 810, 823
collected many garlands of skulls” and “chariots [of the gods] could be seen in the sky. The sun pulled at his chariot, to make a passage through the blood” (Hemratan verses 576-77). Such ancestries serve to exalt the heroism of the chiefs and put the action of the narrative in a moral and ‘historical’ continuum with norms appropriated from the canonized Sanskrit epics. Significantly, they are not invoked for the figure of Ratansen. To reiterate a point made above, the heroism of the chiefs is achieved almost at the expense of the king.

In this context, the Jain poems both converge with, and diverge from, the royally sponsored genealogies and chronicles. On the one hand, they are similar in asserting their descent from sastric predecessors and values. On the other, it is striking that where the royally sponsored genealogies and chronicles validate the contemporary Rajput order by invoking and appropriating past kings, the Jain poems about Padmini make the chiefs Gora and Badal, rather than the king Ratansen, bear the burden of these legitimizing concerns. It is thus apparent that within the broad rubric of paeans to Rajput heroism, the bardic and Jain versions of the Padmini story in late medieval Rajasthan demonstrate these significant divergences in their portrayal of the king and the chiefs.

The divergences continue in the resolution of the relationship between king and chiefs. All the Jain versions (Hemratan, Labdodhay, Dalpativijay and Bhagyavijay) are at pains to emphasize that Ratansen rewards Badal with half the kingdom and half its wealth, after the victory against Alauddin Khalji.93

In a historical conjuncture where the transition from kinship-based control of territory and resources to monarchical states was incomplete, and was being constantly contested, the Rajasthani Jain poems re-construct a past where the chiefs did not depend for their status or their power, upon the king.94 Thus the past is clearly constructed in line with the political imperatives of the present. As Hemratan explains, the chiefs decide to stay on at Chitor even after their rift with the king, as they perceive a threat to the kingdom when the fort is besieged (verse 371). Nor does the rift come in the way of their ready response to the queen’s plea for help.

93 Hemratan 588; Labdodhay p.102, dhal 33, v.3; Dalpativijay 2827; Bhagyavijay 866
94 Hemratan 367-70; Labdodhay p.66; Dalpativijay 2575-2577; Bhagyavijay 527
Significantly, they address Padmini as mother (*māri*). The kinship terminology evokes past (relatively more egalitarian), clan-based relationships, as much as a contemporary (late medieval) paternalist idiom of royal authority over all subjects, including Rajput chiefs. Gora and Badal are clearly defined by the Rajasthani poems as heroic, and they are as sharply critical of the assembly’s decision as the queen herself. They invoke the norm of *khitrīvat*, the duty of the kshatriya, which is defined as the preservation of ‘kshatriya custom,’ the defence of honour through loyalty to the king. Such *khitrīvat* is defined as a higher norm governing the political conduct and moral universe of a Rajput chief, and overriding conflicts between king and chiefs. It is noteworthy that the norm is defined by appealing to a *sastric, varna* identity, now appropriated by a late medieval, regional ruling elite for purposes of legitimation.

The Rajasthani Jain poems indicate the intensity of this historical contradiction between king and chiefs in a number of ways. They are assiduous in describing the rewards to be gained from *khitrīvat*. Not only has Badal defended the honour of his lineage, he has also won for himself half the kingdom and half its wealth. The emphasis on material rewards itself suggests that such demands upon the chiefs may not have been easy to sustain as abstract ideals. Secondly, in an order where kinship and descent were the avenues for political power, defending the honour of the lineage through proof of loyalty to the superior lord, was a political necessity. It was the guarantee of continued access to the network of military employment and political power. The Rajasthani Jain poems are distinctive in that they encode the political compulsions attendant upon their service, in terms of purity of lineage and adherence to sastric norms.

At the same time, the valour of the chiefs was perceived as a potential threat to the king’s authority. This is apparent from the royally sponsored and patronized bardic narratives, as well as the Brahmanical *Amarakavyam*. In the latter text, the idea of the palanquin procession and the rescue of Ratansen are attributed to the “very clever” (*prayūramatiyuḥ*) Gora. However, the subsequent defeat of Alauddin is the result not of the conspicuous valour of Gora and Badal alone, but of the entire body of chieftains who accompany the palanquin procession.

---

95 Hemratan 365, 368, 370, etc.; Labdodhay pp. 67, 68, etc.; Dalpativijay 2573, 2578, 2584, etc.; Bhagyavijay 525, 530, etc.
(Amarakavyam 7.16-17). There is no mention of the death of Gora in battle, nor of the rewards won by Badal. The two chiefs disappear from the narrative after this brief mention. The focus returns to the valour of the brothers and sons of the royal lineage, twelve of whom are crowned successively before dying in battle against the emperor of Delhi (7.24). The canto culminates with the deaths of Lakshmasimha and then his brother Ratnasi, in the battle against Alauddin (7.31-32).

In Dayaldas Rav's Rana Raso and the royally sponsored chronicles and genealogies, Gora and Badal are simply not mentioned. In the Rana Raso it is unnamed ministers of Ratansen who advise him to send warriors in the palanquin procession to Alauddin's camp. Ratansen and his son lead sixteen hundred warriors in the procession. In the fierce battle that ensues at the imperial camp, the emperor is defeated and returns to Delhi. The narrative of Padmini in the Rana Raso ends at this point. Gora and Badal do not figure at all, nor do subsequent events. This suggests that the poem reconstructed the first siege of Chitor to exemplify the heroism of its kings. Dayaldas states this in so many words in his invocation: his intention is to describe the praises of the blemishless Sisoda kings.\footnote{Quoted in Motilal Menariya, Rajasthani Bhasha aur Sahitya, 4th ed., Allahabad: Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, 1994, p.229}

The potential conflict between king and chiefs is enunciated most clearly in the Chitor Udaipur Patnama. Unlike the other bardic narratives of Padmini, the Patnama does not marginalize Gora and Badal. However, their relationship with the king is given an extra dimension, in that they are represented as kinsmen of Padmini's father Samansi. They are persuaded to accompany Padmini from Sidhal to Chitor after her marriage to Ratansen, along with four other chiefs, Fatiya, Jetmal, Kalo and Ramo. Fatiya and Jetmal belong to the lineage of the Baghelas (Patnama fol. 103 a, p.375).\footnote{The lineage of Gora and Badal is missing in the transcript of the Patnama I consulted at Udaipur.} In this context it is noteworthy that all the Jain poems consistently omit any reference to the lineage of Gora and Badal. This subtly locates the heroism of the chiefs outside of any particular clan or 'Rajput' identity, so that it may suggest heroism such as that of the Osval patrons of these poems. In other words, the conspicuous absence of
lineage for Gora and Badal may point to Osval affirmation of the new relations of clientship emergent in the late medieval Rajput states of Rajasthan, the mode of their own rise to political power.

In the *Patnama*, the six chiefs are exalted above the ranks of "warriors valiant in battle," of whom there are many in Ratansen's army. They are described as "valiant in virtue," in the manner of Nahal Asji. The latter voluntarily submits to decapitation to prove his loyalty to his king Samansi, and then as a headless torso, salutes the king who ordered his death (fol. 101 b, p.370). Since Gora and Badal are Samansi's kinsmen, he cannot compel them to obedience (*chākri leba*). Nor can he gift them to his daughter in dowry. Such options would be available to him if they were his followers (*chākar*), instead of his kinsmen. It is Padmini therefore who persuades the chiefs to accompany her. She asserts her kinship ties with them and appeals to their "brotherly" obligation to her (fol. 102 b, pp.372-73). The precise argument Padmini uses is significant: she appeals to them as brothers, to protect her at Chitor from any betrayal or danger (fol. 103 a, 374). When Samansi hears of the chiefs' consent to the proposal, he is reassured as well, and agrees to send his daughter with Ratansen: "Now we will bless you; Kavar Padmini will accompany you; her protectors made their preparations before you, and have departed; now there is no need for any anxiety" (fol. 103 b, p.376). As kinsmen of the queen, the chiefs regard Ratansen as their "brother-in-law" (*jījā sāhab*). They agree to accompany Padmini only after due protocol is observed and their status (as kinsmen of the queen rather than followers gifted to her in dowry) is publicly reaffirmed (fol. 103 a, pp.374-75).

Gora, Badal, Fatiya and Jetmal therefore retain their privileges and status in Chitor, autonomous of service grants or political favour from its king Ratansen. An autonomy that was merely stated in the Jain poems is here given a concrete location in the politics of royal marriages. The Jain poems do not mention any natal connection between Gora, Badal and Padmini. As discussed above, their autonomy in the Jain poems articulates the fragile relations between king and chiefs in the Rajput kingdoms of the region, in general terms. The *Patnama* on the other hand ascribes the chiefs' autonomy to their kinship with the queen. This reflects a sharp awareness of the pressures attendant upon marriages between ruling lineages in late medieval Rajasthan. In
sixteenth-century Mevar such a situation had culminated in the deaths of both the king and his stepmother's brother, who occupied precisely such a position as Gora and Badal in the *Patnama*, that of privileged protector of queen and her interests.\(^9\)

The *Patnama* develops the logic of this potential conflict to its fullest in its resolution. After Gora and Badal have achieved what Ratansen's other nobles could not, the defeat of Alauddin after twelve long years, Ratansen kills them with his own hands. The account is worth quoting in full:

> Then Ravalji thought to himself; [that] now even the Patsah feels defeated; twelve years have gone by since he arrived here; now he will also depart from here; and I can rest easy in my mind; Shri Eklingnath will repair my kingdom; if these two, Goroji and Badalji remain alive, then they always be there to taunt me; they preserved my rule over my kingdom and the fort of Chitor; so these two brothers must be finished off. Thinking thus, he [Ratansen] reached the Sukalya lake; there Shri Hajur cut off the heads of both Goraji and Badalji; their heads went and fell into the Sukalya lake (*Patnama* fol. 127 b, p.461).

To sum up then, the representation of king and chiefs and their relations in the narratives of Padmini in late medieval Rajasthan, is governed by a number of imperatives. First, the figure of Ratansen is recast in the genealogical and bardic traditions of the region, within the context of emerging norms of kingship and sovereignty. Second, the Jain poems and bardic chronicles present strikingly divergent perceptions of the valour of the chiefs. In the former, the chiefs achieve their heroism practically at the expense of the ruler. In the latter, they are either marginal or absent, or else are killed by the ruler himself when their heroism threatens his authority. These divergences must be understood in the context of the poems' production in a patronage network that had to accommodate the often-divergent perceptions and aspirations of both ruler and his chiefs.

**Queens and wives**

As discussed above, marriage-alliances and clan exogamy were central to the political order in the late medieval Rajput kingdoms – in other words, patriarchy was crucially implicated

\(^9\) See the conflict between Rana Ratnasingh and Suryamal Hada, fn. 72.
in processes of state formation. This symbiotic relationship between the patriarchal and political domains was iterated in norms defining the obligations of the elite Rajput woman, to her husband, lineage and ultimately the state. It has been pointed out that the literary production patronized by the Rajput elite in the regional kingdoms of Rajasthan was directed towards the consolidation of this Rajput political order. Therefore, it is not surprising that the representation of the queen Padmini was firmly subordinated to these ends.

The marginalization of the queen is most striking in the historiographical genres of *vat*, *khyat* and *vansavali*, that were directed towards legitimizing ruling lineages. Nainsi's *Khyat* merely mentions "the matter of Padmini" while the *Raval Ranaji ri Vat* makes her the reason for Alauddin's attack on Chitor. The relatively late dates of both these accounts (late seventeenth century) would suggest that their authors had access to the regional narrative emerging in the Hemratan tradition. It can therefore be assumed that the generic conventions of these forms (in turn a reflection of their political underpinnings) are responsible for this cursory mention of the queen. Brevity engendered by 'official' discomfort with recounting the defeat of the king and the loss of kingdom, is compounded by an understanding that queens play a strictly instrumental role in the history of kings.

In contrast to these accounts, the Jain poems about Padmini appropriate the conventions of *kavya*, as discussed above. They thus treat the figure of the queen in some detail. These Jain poems can be seen as defining the normative place of queen and wife in the political order, through their depiction of five Rajput women: Padmini, Prabhavati the chief queen, Badal's mother and the wives of Gora and Badal.

All the Jain Padmini poems introduce the figure of Prabhavati first. It is this favourite queen of Ratansen (*patrani*) who triggers off the king's quest for a Padmini woman. The king and queen quarrel over the food that she cooks for him. In fact, the relationship between them is defined around her feeding him to his satisfaction. It is her skill in preparing seventy different kinds of food (reiterated in all the Jain Padmini poems over two centuries), that earns her the privileged position of chief queen (*patrani*) in the first place. The Rajasthani term used for this talent of hers is *guna*, which also translates revealingly as "virtue." Her culinary proficiency is a
mark of her devotion (*bhagati*) to her husband (Hemratan verses 21-23). When Ratansen criticizes the food she has cooked for him, she challenges him to find a Padmini woman who will cook for him.

Thus the first reference to a Padmini woman is also made in the context of culinary abilities. This suggests the sustained redefinition by the Jain poems within a domestic idiom, of systems of classification of women that were ultimately derived from medieval *koka śāstra* (the ‘science’ of erotics). The reasons for such redefinition may perhaps lie in the medieval Jain context: first, in the Jain monastic distrust of sexuality, and second, in the social moorings of the trading elites that patronized Jain literary production. Among the latter, marriage alliances were not the main mechanism for the expansion of family or clan-based trading networks. Women therefore may not even have had the limited political space that their Rajput counterparts did, allowing the former to be comprehended entirely within the idiom of domesticity.

Both Hemratan and Labdodhay comment explicitly on Prabhavati’s actions. They see her challenge to her husband the king’s authority as the mark of unwarranted pride, that brings about her downfall. Rajput and Jain concerns are woven together in her trajectory, as her challenge to Ratansen’s authority is actually a flouting of the central norm of *sami dharam* in these poems.

Both Hemratan and Labdodhay use the occasion of this domestic quarrel to define the figure of a good wife in terms of her subservience to her husband. The definition is in general terms extending beyond the specific narrative context of kings and queens. This is in keeping with the wider Jain lay audience for these poems: “The lady became proud, and lost the pride [of her privileged position] she had earned by her humility. Without humility good fortune [of having a husband] does not remain, without [such] good fortune there is no destiny [left] at all” (Hemratan verse 35). Labdodhay further emphasizes this lesson by introducing an encounter between Ratansen and Prabhavati when he returns successful from his quest. Ratansen now throws her words back in her face, and Prabhavati is left ruining her pride (Labdodhay 19, verses 3-5).

The figure of the fractious queen points equally to ever-present Rajput anxieties over conflicts between queens in the household of the polygamous king or chief. The custom of queens being referred to by their natal clan-names has been mentioned above. The Jain poems omit clan-
affiliations consistently, both with reference to the chiefs and the queens. They thereby orient the Padmini narrative to their own concerns. The *Patnama* works by precisely the opposite logic. All thirteen queens of Ratansen are named individually, as well as by clan-affiliation, in the genealogical list which opens the narrative of this king’s reign (*Patnama* fol. 93 a, pp.331-32). During the quarrel over food between Ratansen and his queens, the chief queen is not named individually, but referred to by her natal clan-affiliation as the Pariharni. This suggests the location from which she challenges the king (fol. 93 b, p.337). Moreover, she rejects Ratansen’s expectation that his queens should know to cook: “We are the daughters of kings ... we are daughters of Rajputs with land, homes and horses, what do we know of cooking. Until today, we have not even boiled water in the kitchen, nor have we seen it being done” (fol. 93 b, pp.337-38). Ratansen is as enraged as in the Jain poems, and leaves similarly to find a Padmini who can “prepare such food” and serve him. The *Patnama* adapts from the Jain poems, the plot of the fractious queen challenging the king’s authority within his household from the Jain poems, and recasts it in a distinctively Rajput perspective. The queens are more independent of the king’s authority in this narrative, implicitly by virtue of their natal clan-affiliations. They reject the domestic demands he makes upon them. They remain unrepentant, and the arrival of Padmini as Ratansen’s fourteenth queen is not depicted as affecting the status of her co-wives (fol. 106 a, p.386).

These differences between the Jain and the Rajput-bardic narratives continue in the depiction of Padmini herself. She is first invoked as an abstracted feminine, domestic norm of culinary virtuosity. These skills do not belong in the conventional descriptions of beautiful women who form the objects of quests for heroes, in the romance-narratives of medieval north India (see Chapter 1). It is interesting that in Hemratan’s poem Ratansen does not know at first where a Padmini woman is to be found. This would suggest that the association between the island of Singhal and the figure of the Padmini woman had not yet become a commonplace cultural assumption in the region. Hemratan’s successors in this Jain tradition present both Padmini’s location in the fabled land of Singhal, and Ratansen’s consequent journey there, in increasingly matter-of-fact terms.
Heroines in distant lands as the objects of quest-narratives were already an element of early medieval Jain attempts to recast the conventions of romance. This included heroines on the island of Simhala, and the hero gained access to this land of diamonds and jewels through an aerial journey. In the fifteenth century Rayanaseharakahā by Jinaharsagani, the king Ratnasekhara and the princess Ratnavati meet in the Kamadeva temple in Simhaladvipa.99 In narratives of Rajput heroism in late medieval Rajasthan however, such heroines in distant lands were an unfamiliar phenomenon. In this context where marriage represented what it did for the Rajput elite, princes did not set off for distant lands to marry princesses of unknown lineages.

The celebration of the woman’s beauty as possessing autonomous narrative value, is doubly unusual. This is so in the Jain literary tradition dominated by monastic authorship and its distrust of physical perfection seen as a marker of human perishability and illusion. It is equally unusual in the Rajput heroic traditions of late medieval Rajasthan. In the latter, the beauty of the queen is taken for granted as a conventional narrative trope. Further, in these Rajasthani versions the beautiful woman is not by herself the narrative trigger for the Rajput king’s quest or his conquests. This is in contrast to the heroic-romance and oral epic conventions operative in Jayasi’s Padmavat. The change of formula is a function of the patriarchal and political norms of these regional elite Rajput lineages in the late medieval period. Skepticism and distrust of feminine beauty (as a marker of human sexuality) from a Jain monastic angle of vision, coincide with the emerging regulation of elite Rajput patriarchy. Thus the beauty of Padmini is circumscribed in all these narratives, Jain poems as well as bardic chronicles.

To begin with, in the Jain narratives it is not her beauty but her ‘virtue’ defined in terms of her culinary skills that motivates Ratansen to seek her. The first description of her beauty occurs when Ratansen is marrying her: “Bees hummed and buzzed [around her], Padmini’s fragrance was so intoxicating. The lost bees could not tear themselves away from her. Who can describe her beauty, she surpassed Indrani” (Hemratan verses 86-87). This paves for the way for a more elaborate description in the context of their conjugal bliss. Hemratan’s erotic detail (verses

110-118) is elaborated into a full-fledged nakh-shikh-varnan by Labdodhay (Labdodhay 21-23, verses 1-19). In both these descriptions, the beauty of Padmîni is legitimized by being firmly moored in her love for her lord (sami) (Hemratan verse 114). In other words, Padmîni’s beauty is constantly directed towards being ‘legitimately’ experienced, by her husband and by no one else. Up to this point, these narratives also give no indication that the figure of the Padmîni woman and the sensuous descriptions of her beauty, are drawn from medieval traditions of erotics. Instead, Hemratan justifies the erotic detail by appealing to more generalized conventions of kavya: “The essence of poetry and narrative is [erotic] desire” (kavîtā kathā rasa kāma rasa, gāhā gūḍha guṇa goṭhi) (verse 117). And even as they celebrate the conjugal bliss of the king and his new wife, the Jain poems deploy a revealing image first used by Hemratan, that displays their unease with the celebration of feminine beauty. The king is seen as bound and trapped in the bliss of his newfound love, like a sandal tree weighed down by the beautiful creeper clinging to it (Hemratan verse 116).

The unease persists. This beauty of Padmîni is seen as responsible for attracting towards itself the improper gaze, first of Ragho Chetan, and then of Alauddin, thus bringing threats to queen, king, fortress and kingdom. Significantly, Ragho Chetan with his brahmanical learning describes Padmîni to Alauddin in a complete nakh-shikh-varnan where his gaze travels over the entire female body. Similarly, it is Ragho Chetan who recites the Padmîni-Citrini-Hastini-Sankhini catalogue of the erotics traditions, in describing Padmîni’s beauty to the mleccha emperor Alauddin. He does so in the Sanskrit of the koka sastra tradition, and then translates for the benefit of the emperor. Given the circumscribing of the queen’s beauty and king’s desire just discussed, Ragho Chetan’s descriptions of Padmîni are clearly meant to be interpreted as transgressive of norms of both aesthetic and political decorum, that required the queen to be firmly removed from the public gaze. Thus his betrayal of his obligations to his lord (sāmidharam nai didhī chheha) (Hemratan verse 145) is not limited merely to his instigating Alauddin to attack Chitor. A comparison with Jayasi’s poem here is revealing. The nakh-shikh-varnan is deployed

100 See also Labdodhay p.23, verse 1.
on numerous occasions in the Padmavat, suggesting the degree to which the figure of the beautiful queen is an autonomous norm in the premakhyan tradition and in Jayasi’s Sufi appropriation of it.

Ragho Chetan’s role in these poems draws upon the sustained anti-brahman polemic of the Jain scholastic and scriptural tradition. In a revealing variation, the bardic Chitor-Udaipur Patnama casts Ragho Chetan as two genealogists, who quarrel with Ratansen over the gifts they are entitled to upon his marriage with Padmini. The king challenges them to bring the enemy Alauddin to attack Chitor, a challenge that they take up. Once they have fulfilled this ‘commitment’ however, they return to the fold as it were, switching allegiances again and aiding Ratansen against the emperor. This Patnama account produced by the hereditary genealogists of the Mevar Ranas, seeks to rescue the figure of the genealogists from the charge of betrayal. It does so by placing the blame for their initial defection upon the king, and then having them return to the ‘correct’ side.

In the Rajasthani versions, the figure of Padmini must be recuperated through other means, overriding this profound unease. Her beauty has endangered the kingdom, a trope that even the Raval Ranaji ri Vat incorporates in its all-too-brief mention of her. As queen however, she articulates the moral norms of this world, in the second half of these narratives (dealing with the siege of Chitor by Alauddin). She laments the state of Chitor, defines the ideals of sat and khitrivat, and is firm in her resolve not to surrender. This is a resolve repeated in identical terms through the Jain texts: “I will cut out my tongue and burn my own body, but will not go to the asura’s home” (khanḍā jībha dahān nījā deha, piṇa navī jāūn āsurān geha) (Hemratan verse 359).

Significantly, the descriptions of her beauty recede from this part of the Jain Padmini poems. This suggests that her virtue, her sat is defined virtually in opposition to her beauty. It is this feminine virtue that mobilizes the heroic action at the center of the poems.

The opposition between feminine beauty and virtue suggested in the depiction of Padmini, is borne out by the description of Badal’s wife. Her beauty is once again an obstacle to the warrior, as she consciously uses it to distract him. Her mother-in-law sanctions this strategy of hers: “Go and keep your husband within the home . . . Adorn yourself most appealingly, and wear beautiful new clothes. Speak loving and amorous words, and draw him close to you by any
means” (Hemratan verses 432-33). The wife ultimately has to be schooled into virtue by Badal himself, the chief eager to uphold his dharma and win glory and fame in doing so.

In contrast to such physical beauty, Gora’s wife is termed a sundari, when she decides to immolate herself upon Gora’s death in battle: “Her body swelled with love. Every pore filled with valour . . . She gave away much wealth, adorned herself and mounted a swift horse. She departed praising Rama, the beautiful woman bathed in fire” (Hemratan verse 603). Bhagyavijay adds details to this description, for increased emphasis: “She bathed and worshipped Gauri; and wore fresh, pure robes. She invoked her husband’s name and blessed him . . . She sat on the sacred pile of wood; and the beautiful woman gave herself up to the refuge of the fire” (Bhagyavijay verses 890-91). Badal’s reaction reflects the overwhelming approval of the narrative: “Badal heard this and was exultant. Mother, your love is blessed” (Hemratan verse 602). The Jain poems about Padmini are thus consistent in underplaying the queen’s beauty. They affirm an alternative, patriarchal norm of female virtue, directed towards upholding and encouraging the pursuit of heroism by Rajput chiefs and warriors.

Badal’s mother and wife play a comparable role to Padmini in these poems, of women who because of their loyalties if not their beauty, are a potential obstacle to the kshatriya warrior’s duties. When they are first introduced into the narrative, their attachment to son and husband is seen to threaten his higher loyalty to queen, king and kingdom. Badal’s mother first appears just after Padmini has succeeded in mobilizing the assistance of Gora and Badal, and the latter is preparing to do battle with Alauddin’s forces. The mother provides three reasons to dissuade Badal. For one, he is very young, and her only support (to viṣṇa kāī na bijī tek) (Hemratan verse 411, Bhagyavijay verse 581). Secondly, all the other warriors and chiefs in Chitor have agreed to surrender the queen, and see nothing dishonourable in such a course of action. Thirdly, Badal is not even bound to the king by any ties of service. His village and home are not the king’s, he takes care of his own expenses (Hemratan verse 414, Bhagyavijay verse 583). The two last reasons are political arguments about the nature of a chief’s service ties and obligations to the king. Strictly speaking, Badal’s mother is accurate in absolving her son of any such obligations, subsequent to his quarrel with the king and his renouncing of royal grants (grās). Badal does not
contest the political argument, but refutes his mother by invoking the ideal of kshatriya valour that he is eager to defend (Hemratan verse 424, Bhagyavijay verse 593). In the process of affirming these norms of personal bravery, Badal also affirms a loyalty to the king that transcends his particular service obligations or the lack of them.

Once again, Bhagyavijay’s additions are revealing. The mother’s and wife’s entreaties are repeated verbatim from Hemratan. Extra verses are inserted in Badal’s responses to their dissuasion. For each plea of theirs, Badal describes the glories of battle in extended terms. He rebukes his wife for hindering him: “Listen, beautiful woman! Do not obstruct me, my word is as unshakeable as the Ved” (Bhagyavijay verse 628). When Badal’s wife finally ratifies his decision to do battle with the emperor’s forces, Hemratan’s poem has the warrior applauding his wife and defining the terms of his relationship with her: “Now you are truly my mistress. You have spoken wise words, and have preserved the honour of your family’s traditions” (verse 460). Bhagyavijay inserts additional stanzas here as well, for greater emphasis: “You come from an exalted family (uchha ghar), and advise me ill, asked the husband. You are a virtuous woman as befits your lineage (kulvanti nari), [you must] embellish the honour of the household” (verses 638-39). The greater emphasis on schooling the wife would suggest an intensifying of patriarchal regulations in the eighteenth century, directed towards upholding what may have been an increasingly fragile political order.

As discussed earlier, Hemratan’s poem barely mentions the queen in its prologue. Hers is merely the pre-text around which to mobilize norms of heroic conduct. Padmini therefore recedes from the poem once the chiefs have been stirred to action, reappearing only briefly at the end to applaud and reward the victorious Badal. She is not mentioned in the epilogue at all. Between Hemratan’s poem and Bhagyavijay’s version composed in 1702, however, the figure of the queen under threat gradually grows in symbolic significance. Labdodhay’s version composed in 1645 makes her foremost among all women in virtue/chastity, having defended her honour in adversity (sati siromaṇi sāchī thaPadmini ... pāyo kasta padyaṁ jina śīla suhāmanī re) (Labdodhay 104 verse 1). Bhagyavijay exalts this struggle to mythic proportions, literally. As Hanuman was to Ram, so Badal is to Ratansi Rana; and Padmini is like the satī Sita (verse 900).
From her relative marginality in Hemratan’s text, where the Padmini figure is not even mentioned in the epilogue to the poem, she becomes increasingly central through the definition of her *shila dharma*. She becomes the symbolic norm underpinning and even guaranteeing a fragile political order that was subject to constant threats from its own chiefs within, and from ‘alien’ enemies without. The epilogues of the Rajasthani Jain poems thus gradually intensify this symbolic investment in her, as they make the queen’s *shila dharma* the foundation upon which *hindu dharma* is built.

The bardic *Chitor-Udaipur Patnama* is again shaped by its proximity to the official Sisodia perspective, in its depiction of the queen. As already discussed, the monarchical affiliations of the Barva genealogists’ chronicle bring about a distinctive resolution to the contradictions between glorification of royal lineage and celebration of chiefly heroism. In that context, it has been seen that the poems sponsored by the Osval Jain elite and the bardic accounts dependent on royal patronage diverge in their articulation of this historical contradiction. In the case of the queen, however, Jain monastic perspectives and Rajput patriarchal regulations overlap to a far greater extent.

Thus the *Patnama* displays even greater ambivalence than the Jain poems about the beautiful queen. The account does not mention Padmini’s beauty at all either during the course of Ratansen’s quest for her or around their marriage. Instead, her father’s lineage is identified, as Puvar Rajput (*Patnama* fol.95b, p.347), and later as Dodiya Rajput (*Patnama* fol.103b, p.377). The ascription of two lineages may point to the process of steady accretion of layers of oral accounts, by which such bardic chronicles were constituted. Historically, however, both the Puvar and Dodiya lineages were less powerful and thus lower in status than the Mevar Sisodias. The *Patnama* thus offers two sets of overlapping constructions of Ratansen’s quest. It retains the Jain narrative of a quarrel over food and Ratansen’s search for a Padmini woman. This is how he addresses a challenge to his authority from his wives. Over this construction the *Patnama* superimposes what can be seen as a Sisodia Rajput interpretation. Thus the king marches with his army, and marries the daughter of a lesser lineage. Ratansen himself sees his marriage to Padmini as no different from his thirteen other marriages: (*Patnama* fol.106b, p.388).
Padmini’s beauty is mentioned in the *Patnama* on two occasions only. First, when her father Samansi points out that his daughter belongs to the Padmini class of women, and as such, may be too delicate to withstand the heat and hardships of Mevar (Patnama fol. 101a, pp.366-67). The catalogue of the four kinds of women is invoked cursorily at this point, only to suggest that Padmini therefore requires especially valiant warriors from the island of Sidhal to protect her in Chitor. The only other instance when her beauty is described briefly, is when Alauddin finally catches a glimpse of her: “standing in all her beauty, from the tips of her nails to her eyes (*nakh chakh*); the Patsah saw Padmaniji, and was stunned out of his senses; struck blind by her radiance, the Patsah came to his senses only after a long while” (Patnama fol.125b, p.456). At this point also, the queen’s beauty is made an index of her husband the king’s stature. As Ratansen boasts to Alauddin, he has fifteen such Padmini women as queens (Patnama fol.126a, p.456). The bardic *Patnama* adheres to Rajput norms of patriarchal and political decorum which removed the queen from the public gaze. Thus it does not describe the conjugal bliss of Ratansen and Padmini, and has no *nakh-shikh-varnan*. The figure of the queen is not even subjected to the erotics catalogue from Ragho Chetan that was such a persistent feature of the Jain poems.

As discussed above, the Jain poems made a symbolic connection between threatened queen, endangered kingdom and their rescue by heroic chiefs. In contrast, the *Patnama* explained the allegiance of chiefs to queen in terms of the political network of her natal clan, instead of an abstract ideal of chiefly heroism. The kinship between queen and chiefs is carried to its logical culmination. Padmini kills herself on hearing of the death of her ‘brothers’ at the hand of her husband the king: “Hajur raised his hand against my brothers; now I have no desire left to live; Padmaniji said this and then also jumped into the lake and became one with the water. Raniji Shri Padmaniji gave up her body in the year Samvat 1258” (Patnama fol. 128a, p.465). One can only speculate about the impulse behind this startling resolution. The bardic account’s unease over the exaltation of chiefly heroism spills over, as it were, to shape the resolution of the queen’s

---

101 The segregation of women by purdah regulations as well as the display of social status by the removal of elite women from the public gaze, would have been patriarchal practices common to medieval elites across regions, communities and ethnic backgrounds.
trajectory as well. This is not an abrupt resolution either. It has been prepared for by a lengthy
discussion of Padmini’s horoscope and her longevity, just after her marriage to Ratansen. At this
point, it is already worked out that she and the ‘brethren’ she has brought from the island of
Sidhal, will live for the same length of time (*Patnama* fol.106b, p.388).

The *Patnama* thus consistently deprives the figure of the queen of all symbolic
significance. The bardic account doesn’t emphasize her exceptional beauty. It doesn’t make her
the voice identifying the political and moral crisis in Chitor. And it doesn’t depict her immolating
herself in climactic proof of her virtue. This absence of the *jauhar* from this narrative (in contrast
to another royally-sponsored account in the eighteenth-century *Raval Ranaji ri Vat*) is consistent
with the manner in which the *Patnama* concludes its account of Ratansen’s reign. Alauddin
conquers the fort, as much due to superior force as due to prior prophecy and the will of Chitor’s
patron goddess. However, Chitor is regained within Ratansen’s lifetime, which the *Patnama*
prolongs by the device of a boon the king obtained from Gorakhnath. In the transition from the
reign of one king to the next that defines a narrative unit in the genre of the genealogy, Chitor
remains with the Sisodias.

**Threats to the order**

This chapter has demonstrated how ruling lineages in Rajput states such as Mevar set out
to systematically re-construct the past with a view to legitimizing themselves. In addition, other
elite groups such as the Osval Jains had their own stakes invested in this project. These groups
participated in the new construction of Rajput history only to re-orient it subtly to their own ends.
As the above discussion suggests, however, all the Padmini narratives in late medieval Rajasthan
have this in common: they share an awareness of how fragile this Rajput political order is, even as
they celebrate it. Discomfort in late medieval Mevar with the memory of the first sack of Chitor
by Alauddin, shapes the ambivalence of these narratives about the king involved. To this
discomfort, Rajput regulations of elite patriarchy and Jain monastic prescriptions about femininity
attach themselves and produce further ambivalence about the figure of the beautiful queen who
endangered the kingdom.
The narrative of a kingdom in crisis remains useful, however, in helping to define threats to this political and moral order. These threats are directed at the authority of the king, and his due hierarchical relations with all his subjects. What the Padmini narratives achieve is a validation of this particular definition of Rajput order, by depicting threats that are successfully repulsed. Again, as discussed above, one major threat to the order arises from doubts over the potential loyalty of chiefs to the king, doubts that have an edge to them as they articulate a historical contradiction in the formation of the Rajput state.

A second challenge to the king’s authority is identified as stemming from his wives. Their treatment in the Padmini narratives is shaped by different perspectives on the pressures of elite Rajput marriages and their centrality to the Rajput political order. This problematic is fleshed out further in the Jain poems, in the figure of Virbhan. In Hemratan’s poem, this son of Ratansen is instrumental in persuading the assembly of chiefs to surrender the queen to Alauddin. He is driven by resentment against Padmini, for having replaced his mother as the favourite queen: “She took away my mother’s good fortune (sohāga). So when Padmini is given away, my mother will become the mistress again” (Hemratan verses 356-57). Labdodhay further sharpens Virbhan’s persuasions. He has Virbhan articulate all the arguments for surrendering the queen that were stated by the chiefs as well, in Hemratan’s poem. Again, Labdodhay also speaks of Virbhan’s enmity (vair) towards Padmini, for the same reasons (Labdodhay 65, verse 19). Dalpativijay’s Khummān Rasā retains this trope, only changing the name of the son to Jasvant (Khummān Rasā, verse 2565). The Rajasthani Jain poems thus spell out the kind of threat the king and queens could face in the polygamous royal household, where co-wives came from different natal clans. Labdodhay states clearly that Virbhan is misguided, and that he is able to persuade the chiefs because they in turn are misguided in the absence of their leader the king (Labdodhay 65, verse 22). However, it takes the exceptional heroism of Gora and Badal with their outsider status (see above), to rescue queen, king and kingdom from the ignominy that the surrender of the queen would have meant (Hemratan verses 381-82).

The figure of the resentful son is absent from the Patnama. In a bardic account concerned centrally with asserting the legitimacy of the ruling lineage, the surrender of the queen cannot be
contemplated at all. Further, threats to the authority of the king can also not be accepted as emerging from within, as inherent in the structure of the elite Rajput household and Rajput state. Instead, such threats must be located in the figure of an ‘alien’ enemy. This is the function that the figure of the emperor of Delhi, Alauddin Khalji, fulfils.

Khalji’s military campaigns in Rajasthan were the subject of a number of poetic narratives. In addition to the narratives of Padmini discussed in this chapter, his other conquests in Rajasthan were also subjects of poetic reconstruction. The Jain Nayachandra Suri composed the Hammira Mahakavyam in Sanskrit in 1485, about Khalji’s defeat of Hamir of Ranthambhor. This was followed by Jodhraj’s Hamir Raso or Hamirayan (1828), and two other, later compositions, Gval Kavi’s ‘Hamir Haṭh’ and Chandrashekhar’s ‘Hamir Haṭh’. Khalji’s conquest of Jalor was the subject of the Nagar Brahman Padmanabh’s Kān̄hadde Prabandh (1455), and the anonymous Viramde Sōṅgarā ṇ̄r Vāḷī (early eighteenth century) (Purshottam Menariya 1968, 60).

Alauddin was the first ruler of the Delhi Sultanate to make deep inroads into Rajasthan. His campaigns had had a profoundly destructive impact upon the ruling lineages in the region. Thus the siege of Chitor seems to have marked the end of the Guhila dynasty in Mevar. No major ruling lineage seems to have emerged in the region for more than a century after this. The emergence of later accounts suggests that the historical memory of these events circulated orally, long after the events themselves. These oral accounts were recuperated by later ruling lineages for their own purposes. Thus it was a descendant of the Chauhan chief of Jalor defeated by Alauddin, who commissioned the production of the earliest known literary composition about Khalji’s campaigns, the Kān̄hadde Prabandh. From the mid-fifteenth century onwards, newer Rajput ruling lineages consolidated power and established legitimacy by claiming genealogical (and thereby political) descent from those past ruling lineages whose power had been destroyed by Khalji’s campaigns.102 This is the period when the historical memory of Alauddin begins to be

102 The pattern continues into modern times. As late as the nineteenth century, Rajput elites claiming descent from older lineages continued to commission the production of heroic narratives about the defeat of their ‘ancestors’ at the hands of Alauddin. Thus the Brahmin Jodhraj composed the Hamir Raso at the instance of his patron Chandrabhan, the Chauhan chief of Nimrana, in 1828. See Narottamdas Svami Bh.S. 1885, 19.
transformed. The next spurt of literary activity around the subject of Khalji’s Rajasthan campaigns takes place in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, after Chitor was once again destroyed by an emperor of Delhi. The memory of the earlier Khalji campaign was obviously resonant with possibilities for re-interpretation at this historical moment, when the current ruling lineage in Mevar was attempting to resist (and then negotiate suitable terms with), the new imperial power in Delhi.

Hemratan’s opening description of Alauddin indicates his immense power: “The lord of Dilli is a great emperor, his renown boundless throughout the earth . . . All the kings paid obeisance to him. He held everybody under his rule (ekachhatra), gods and men all feared him” (Hemratan verses 139-140). When he is incited by Ragho Chetan into desiring a Padmini woman, he sets off on an expedition for Singhaldvip. Unlike Ratansen with his lone attendant, the emperor sets off with an army of twenty-seven lakhs (Hemratan verse 188). Unlike Ratansen, again, he plans to obtain a Padmini woman by razing the island of Singhal and capturing the king of Sanghal alive (Hemratan verses 193-94). The full implications of Ratansen’s game of chess with the Singhal king become clear only now. The threat of real battle is reserved towards identifying the ‘enemy’. The implicit comparison with Ratansen continues, as Alauddin’s attempt to cross to Sidhal fails when he is thwarted by the sea (Hemratan verse 201). The motif of Alauddin’s expedition to Singhal is dropped in the later accounts in Rajasthan (from Dalpativijay for example). This suggests that it was perceived only as the foil against which Ratansen’s success in obtaining Padmini is to be measured.

In narrating Alauddin’s second expedition to Chitor, Hemratan clarifies what is at stake for the emperor. He desires Padmini, “her image shone constantly in his mind” (verse 184). But once he lays siege to Chitor, more than his desire for Padmini it is his authority as emperor that is at stake. Thus, the terms he offers Ratansen include a demand that his “status be honoured,” and Ratansen prostrate himself (Hemratan verses 271, 275). Ultimately he seeks to achieve his objective by tricking Ratansen and capturing him, thereby revealing his “malice” as a “Khurasani” (Hemratan verse 337, Labdodhay 61, verse 7). But if he is deceitful, he is also gullible. He foolishly agrees to Badal’s suggestion that he send his forces back to Delhi before
Padmini is delivered in the palanquin procession (Hemratan verse 527, Labdodhay 90, verse 3). He is referred to throughout Hemratan’s poem as the “lord of horses” (asapati) (Hemratan verse 395), but is not demonized as an object of terror or hatred. The object of the Jain Padmini poems in concluding with the victory of Gora and Badal over Alauddin, is to celebrate chiefly heroism as well as the defeat of the emperor by the forces of Chitor. In achieving this aim Hemratan also treats the figure of the emperor with less than awe.

In the course of the seventeenth century in Rajasthan, the depiction of Alauddin in the Padmini narratives undergoes a shift, as does the depiction of the battle against him. Labdodhay’s poem of 1645 already refers to the defenders of Chitor as hinduvan (Labdodhay 62, verse 7). The Khumman Raso deploys such a description more frequently (Dalpativijay verses 2459, 2474, 2588 etc). While this in itself may be taken as a description of ethnic rather than religious identity, Dalpativijay’s poem indicates other shifts as well. The Khumman Raso (composed between 1710 and 1734) omits Alauddin’s expedition to Singhal in search of Padmini. Instead, as soon as he hears Ragho Chetan’s description, he decides to obtain Padmini by attacking Chitor and destroying the Hindu (Dalpativijay verse 2474). Padmini elaborates the full implications of this terminology in the poem. The decision to surrender her to Alauddin is unacceptable, because she is a rafaputri, a king’s daughter. The term doubles conveniently for her Rajput identity as well. If she is surrendered, her honour and that of her family will be besmirched, and the world will spit on the lineage of the hinduvan (Dalpativijay verse 2567). The term hinduvan here is gradually being extended beyond a neutral marker of ‘ethnic’ identity, to suggest ‘religious’ affiliation as well. Padmini invokes the virtue (sat shila) of Sita, Kunti and Dropadi, who were similarly tested through suffering (Labdodhay 66, verses 30-31). Again, Dalpativijay extends the implications of this comparison, by casting the parallels with epic protagonists within a prayer from Padmini. She pleads with Shyam and Ram the lord of Sita to protect her, as all others have deserted her. The lord alone can deliver her from this crisis now, just as he heard the cries of Dropadi in distant Dvarika, just as he had helped Bhikham (Bhishma) protect his vow in the Mahabharat, and freed

103 In keeping with the medieval Persianate terminology of ‘Hindu’ and ‘Turak.’
Ugrasen from captivity. Her crisis is comparable, since the asuras have captured the Rana (Dalpativijay verses 2569-70). The invocation of parallels from the epics is a sustained strategy in the Khumman Raso. Badal explicitly likens Padmini to Sita, in her virtue and chastity (Dalpativijay verse 2606).

These images suggest that Dalpativijay’s poem has begun to demonize the enemy far more stridently. Thus, he concludes his account of the Padmini episode in the Khumman Raso, by arguing that Gora and Badal have defended not only sami dharam but also hindu dharam (Dalpativijay verse 2856). Dalpativijay’s increased stridency is matched by other Jain appropriations of Hemratan in eighteenth-century Mevar – by Bhagyavijay, and by a manuscript of Hemratan’s poem dating to 1727. 104 Bhagyavijay’s version exalts the heroism of Gora and Badal by aggrandizing the implications of their battle against Alauddin. As the emperor himself says to Badal, in defending Padmini and the Rao the latter defends his dhramma, which is defined not only as sam dharam but specifically as hindu dhrama. Badal therefore is the shield (dhāl) of the hinduvān (Bhagyavijay verses 842-44). Repeated references to Badal as Hanuman or as Angad incarnate (Bhagyavijay verse 810), and the description of the Rajput warriors chanting the name of Ram as they battle the emperor’s forces (Bhagyavijay verse 821), must be read in the context of such terminology. They indicate a significant re-interpretation of the battle between the Rajputs and the emperor of Delhi. Thus Badal taunts Alauddin that the joginis are thirsty for the blood of the asuras (Bhagyavijay verse 792), and Khuda their god as well as their angels and their five prophets, cannot protect them (Bhagyavijay verses 796-97).

The Chitor-Udaipur Patnama diverged from the Jain poems in its depiction of king, chiefs and queen. However, bardic and Jain narratives display striking convergence in the representation of the enemy. The Patnama completes the demonization of Alauddin, by adding the classic brahmanical tropes of purity and pollution to this picture of the asura king. Thus Ratansen loses Chitor because the patron goddess lifts her mantle of protection from the fort. This

104 Udaysinh Bhatnagar’s edition of Hemratan’s Gora Badal Padmini Caupai provides all the divergences from Hemratan present both in Bhagyavijay as well as this 1727 manuscript of Hemratan. (Jodhpur: Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, 1966)
in turn happens because when Ratansen shows Alauddin around the fort, its lakes, tanks and
temples,

the Patsah kept spitting throughout the way; from the spittle of a Masalman, the power of the
Hidvani gods was reduced . . . where they had [earlier] protected the high-born (*sundar jat*);
but when their blood or spit fell upon a spot, the gods of Hind no longer remained powerful
there. As the Patsah kept spitting, the gods kept retreating from and leaving their abodes in the
fort of Chitor (*Patnama* fol.125b, p.455).

To sum up, it is an indication of how much the Padmini narratives are implicated in the
specific anxieties of Mevar politics in the period, that they locate threats to Rajput polity and
order, in the figure of the emperor of Delhi. And it is an indication of the specific strategies
deployed by the Sisodia rulers of Mevar in their struggle for regional dominance, that this
imperial authority is gradually demonized as Muslim.

A Jain poem outside Rajasthan

The impact of Sisodia royal ideology upon the representation of the king in these
narratives is best revealed, in the variations present in a poem produced outside the region –
Jatmal Nahar’s *Gora Badal ri Katha*. The poem was probably composed in the Lahore region, and
mentions the local Pathan ruler as the poet’s patron. Jatmal himself was an Osval Jain of the
Nahar *gotra*. There is no evidence to show his familiarity with or ignorance of, the Jain narratives
of Padmini in late medieval Rajasthan. However, the subsequent history of transmission, suggests
that the Jain community read his version as continuous with the other Rajasthani Jain narratives of
Padmini. Thus manuscript copies of Jatmal’s version are found routinely in collections of the
religious and secular narratives preserved in Jain *bhandars*.105 This discussion focuses on the
aspects of Jatmal’s version that illuminate by contrast, the regional specificity of the Rajasthani
narratives. Once again, it is in the key issues of kingship, royal marriages and the status of the
enemy, that Jatmal’s variations are significant.

105 See the list of Jatmal manuscripts in the Bibliography.
For a start, in Jatmal’s version, Ratansen belongs not to the Gahilot lineage, but is a Chauhan instead. He is thus located in one of the best-known Rajput lineages of medieval North India, rather than in the specific context of a regional lineage in Mewar. The quest narrative is also refigured, and would suggest echoes of Jayasi rather than the Rajasthani Jain poems. Thus Jatmal does not mention the queen Prabhavati. Nor does he mention a quarrel over food as the cause for the king’s quest. Instead, a Bhatta arrives from Singhaldvip, who tells Ratansen of the wonders of that island, including the beauty of Padmini (verse 6). Echoes of Jayasi continue, as the goal of Ratansen’s life now is to catch a glimpse of Padmini. He must don the guise of a Nath yogi himself (verse 16) and forsake his kingship in order to set out on his quest (verse 14). He reaches the island of Singhal with the help of the Nath yogi, who also seems to have preordained their marriage (verse 20). It is with Ratansen’s appearance as a Nath yogi that Padmini is smitten, before he reveals his kingly identity.

These re-figurations suggest two aspects to Jatmal’s narrative. First, the echoes of the Padmavat are striking enough to suggest that Jatmal may have had access to Jayasi’s Sufi poem. As indicated in Chapter I, Jayasi’s poem traveled as far west as the Lahore region, through trans-regional Sufi circuits of transmission. Whether or not Jatmal actually had access to the Padmavat in a manuscript version cannot be determined on the basis of the available evidence. However, it seems possible to speculate that he may have had access to parts of it at least, as transmitted orally through Sufi circuits.

Secondly, Jatmal’s narrative foregrounds the Chauhan identity of Ratansen, his relinquishing his kingdom for his quest, his donning of Nath robes, and his winning of Padmini as a Nath yogi. These elements indicate that Jatmal was more familiar with the tropes of upward mobility of the wider Rajputizing elites of north India as articulated in the Padmavat. This is in sharp contrast to the emphasis that emerged in late medieval Rajasthan, on kingly status consolidated and ratified through politically negotiated marriages.

Jatmal’s poem also demonstrates crucial variations in the second half of the narrative relating to Alauddin’s siege. Initially, as in the Rajasthani Jain poems, Ratansen is firm on resisting the siege. The king states that he would prefer to die and lose the fort, rather than
surrender to the emperor (Jatmal verse 67). Ultimately, after twelve years of the siege, he accepts
the Sultan’s terms that Padmini reveal her person to the latter. At this point, Jatmal’s narrative
displays a striking deviation from the Rajasthani narratives. When Ratansen is tricked by the
emperor and captured, he fears for his life. The king sends a message to his chiefs in the fort,
asking them to send Padmini to the emperor without delay so that his life may be spared. The
narrator describes this decision as cowardice (kāyar) (verses 80-81). Ratansen later changes his
mind. When Badal arrives to rescue him with the procession of palanquins, the king rebukes the
former sharply, for contemplating the surrender of the queen (verse 117). The earlier deployment
of tropes of Nath asceticism, as well as Ratansen’s brief decision to actually surrender his wife in
exchange for himself, point to Jatmal’s perspective as an outsider. In this narrative, Ratansen’s
status as king is not absolute. He can relinquish his kingdom and become a Nath yogi as in
Jayasi’s Sufi poem. His decision to surrender his wife may be cowardly in the view of the poet,
but it is not beyond the realm of possibility as in the Rajasthani Jain poems.

Again, Jatmal’s poem doesn’t invoke the norm of khitrivat in its treatment of chiefly
valour. Thus, this narrative does not encode the political compulsions of chiefly service in terms
of purity of lineage or adherence to sastric norms. Once again, it diverges from the Rajasthani Jain
poems in this respect. The loyalty of the chiefs is taken for granted. There is no prior quarrel
between the king and his chiefs, either. The chiefs are also not related to the queen, as in the
Chitor Udaipur Patnama. The loyalty of the chiefs is simply one of the necessary conditions of
the service they render to a superior overlord, whether Rajput king or Mughal emperor. The
autonomy ascribed to the chiefs through one means or another in the Rajasthani versions, is thus
absent in Jatmal’s narrative. This locates his version within the wider context of the late medieval
political order. As such, the loyalty of the chiefs is not potentially in conflict with the king’s
authority. Nor does such loyalty have to be made the center of an evolving, distinctively regional,
‘Rajput’ ideology and identity. It is in keeping with this wider service ethic, that Jatmal’s poem
does not mention the king’s rewarding of Badal for his distinguished service.

106 This is present in all the manuscript versions of Jatmal I have been able to consult, and cannot therefore
be regarded as scribal error in a single manuscript.
Jatmal’s poem also does not introduce the figure of the king’s recalcitrant son. Since this version is located outside of the pressures of Mevar politics, Jatmal is not concerned with establishing the pre-eminence of the Sisodia lineage. The poem therefore sees no need, presumably, to insert the figure of the rebellious son to suggest the surrender of the queen. Instead, the king himself can suggest the queen’s surrender, as he fears for his life. Nor is Jatmal’s poem concerned to depict the specific pressures of the king’s polygamous household in the Rajput states of Rajasthan.

Produced under Pathan patronage in the Mughal province of Lahore, Jatmal’s poem also does not invoke the Khurasani’s malice. It merely speaks of the Sultan’s deceit (kapat) (verses 76-78), which feeds in turn on Ratansen’s greed (ati lobhakara) (verse 78). The conflict between Ratansen and Alauddin is one in which both Rajputs and Turks died in great numbers (verse 137), before the chiefs Gora and Badal win the day with their valour and their loyalty to their lord.

To sum up, Jatmal’s Osval Jain version produced outside the regional Rajput kingdoms of Rajasthan, brings the figure of the king more in line with the Rajput and Rajputizing adventurer-protagonists of the oral epics of North India. This is in contrast to the Rajasthani Jain versions which re-present the figure of the king in accordance with late medieval, sastric models of kingship. The Rajasthani Jain poems concur with the regional royal chronicles, in exalting the inherited, absolute status of the monarch, even as a guarantee of personal prowess. In contrast, Jatmal’s poem is more in tune with the oral epic model which privileges tests of heroism and one or another form of personal prowess. In keeping with this concern to celebrate the heroic stature of its protagonist, Jatmal’s narrative depicts the queen as instrumental. She is merely the pretext for the king and the chiefs to prove their valour.

These variations in Jatmal Nahar’s version of the Padmini narrative, suggest the degree to which the figure of the king and his trajectory in the Rajasthani narratives (bardic as well as Jain) are shaped by specific Sisodia imperatives, and regional Rajput ideologies. The Rajasthani versions assert Sisodia Rajput dominance by recasting legends of the past in line with norms of status defined through adherence to evolving codes of honour.
Conclusion

This chapter argues that the narratives of Padmini in late medieval Rajasthan used the legend to focus on their real concern, kingship in crisis. In history and in these narratives, the Rajput kings of these regional kingdoms were threatened by powerful external enemies, but even more by recalcitrant chiefs 'within' and turbulent households. Chronicles produced under royal patronage marginalize the role of the chiefs Gora and Badal. In contrast, poems produced at the instance of Osval Jain chiefly patrons valorize the latter's role at the expense of the king. This chapter also argues that these Rajasthani Padmini legends occupy a somewhat unusual place in the wider Jain tradition, in that they display none of the conventional signs of their Jain context. The reasons for this can be found in the place of the Osval elites sponsoring such literary production in the Rajput kingdoms between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. These Osval elites are distinctive in the degree of their proximity to the regional ruling lineages, and their adoption of Rajput mores and practices.

In keeping with the primary focus on kingship, the Padmini narratives depict Padmini and all the other queens, within the rubric of virtuous wives. Jain monastic skepticism of sexuality dovetails conveniently with evolving elite Rajput patriarchy to articulate this norm of the domesticated wife. However, Jain and bardic narratives also diverge. The former ignore the political underpinnings of Rajput marriages, and the role of such marriages in defining the boundaries of an elite Rajput jati in the period. It is to be expected that bardic narratives located in a context of royal patronage emphasize precisely these elements in their treatment of elite Rajput marriages including Padmini's.

Threats to this political order are focused on the figure of Alauddin Khalji. Narratives produced in the early part of this period depict him as the deceitful enemy. However, his unreliability is located not in his nature as an individual or in his status as a Muslim king, but in the exigencies of kingship and statecraft. Later narratives gradually demonize the figure of the Muslim king, and construct a heroic norm in opposition to this figure. They do so by equating danger to the queen explicitly with danger not only to the land but to hindu dharma itself. The reasons for this transition must be sought in the strategies deployed by the Sisodias as they re-
asserted their power against an embattled and subsequently waning Mughal imperial power. In this process, issues of regional supremacy and political sovereignty were recast as the defence of dharma, both Rajput and Hindu, through the trope of defence of the queen. Jatmal Nahar’s version, a Jain narrative of Padmini produced outside Rajasthan under Pathan patronage, illuminates these regional specificities of the Rajasthani narratives of Padmini.